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Appendix

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This is the first Master Plan developed by the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission. The Commission was established as the single agency of State government to lead Governor Whitman's reform of the juvenile justice system. The Commission's foremost responsibility is the custody and care of juveniles committed to and otherwise placed under its jurisdiction (including provision of the Aftercare/Parole function for committed juvenile offenders). However, the Commission has additional significant responsibilities which include: serving an oversight role in county juvenile justice issues; administering the State/Community Partnership Grant Program, coordinating through County Youth Services Commissions the planning and expansion of local sanctions and services; establishing standards for county detention facilities and monitoring compliance; and overseeing the implementation of education programs in county detention facilities.

The Commission's enabling legislation sets forth the scope of the Plan, directing development of a master plan,

which identifies facilities, sanctions and services available to juveniles adjudicated or charged as delinquent and juvenile delinquency prevention programs and which identifies additional needs based upon the extent and nature of juvenile delinquency and the adequacy and effectiveness of available facilities, services and sanctions.

The Commission utilized a multifaceted strategy to respond to the legislative direction including: surveying relevant departments of State government regarding their youth programs; reviewing County Youth Services Commission plans reflecting system service gaps and needs; surveying Commission staff from all of its organizational units; holding a series of regional meetings to solicit input from key public and private sector

actors involved with youth; examining juvenile justice system data and recent trends in New Jersey; and surveying juveniles (and their parents) who were involved with the JJC and other components of the system.

The Plan is presented in three sections. Part I includes an examination of the nature and extent of the juvenile delinquency problem in New Jersey, along with providing a perspective regarding the causes of delinquency; an examination of issues confronted by the juvenile justice system; and a review of key components and processes of the system, along with juvenile justice system data and trends. The discussion addresses such issues as: the importance of prevention and early intervention efforts; the system's inadequate response to juveniles with special needs; the problem of minority confinement; the need for greater interagency coordination; and the need for additional dispositional options.

Part II presents a view of the Juvenile Justice Commission. This includes a description of its key components and initiatives, relevant Commission data and trends, and issues confronting the Commission.

Part III presents recommendations to address Commission issues and recommendations for improvement of the broader juvenile justice system. A summary of Part III is provided below.

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS**

### *I. Implement a Comprehensive and Balanced Plan to Respond to Shortages of Institutional and Noninstitutional Beds and Projections of Continued Growth in Bed Need.*

On average, there was an estimated shortage of 246 beds in 1998 (a total bed need of 1,402 compared with a total bed capacity of 1,156). This includes an estimated shortage of 134 institutional beds and 112 noninstitutional beds. In addition, projected annual growth

in bed need is estimated at 27 per year.

The comprehensive plan to address rising bed needs includes the following interrelated recommendations. Taken together these strategies would provide a balanced response in lieu of a more extensive and expensive capital plan resulting from the expansion of institutional bed capacity.

*A) Increase JJC institutional bed capacity by building two state of the art 144 bed facilities for serious juvenile offenders. This will be in concert with a downsizing of The New Jersey Training School for Boys (NJTSB) from a design capacity of 404 to 300 (i.e., a loss of 104 beds).*

Note that the average daily population at NJTSB in 1998 was 509. The combined result of the above translates to a net gain of 184 institutional beds and contributes significantly to efforts to close the gap between the current level of JJC bed need and bed capacity (i.e., to decrease the Commission's current substantial shortage of beds).

*B) Initiate a State incentive program (similar to the existing State/Community Partnership Grant Program) administered by the JJC, funding counties to plan for and develop community corrections programming for select youth who would otherwise become the responsibility of the JJC.*

This program would provide State funding to counties to plan for and develop community corrections programming for youth who would otherwise be committed to or placed with the JJC. Funded programs would include such alternatives as: residential group homes, highly structured day programs, and intensive probation supervision programs. Funds would primarily be distributed on a formula based on current county use of State resources.

This approach is a step beyond the current State/Community Partnership Grant Program which is administered by the JJC. The Partnership funds a broad range of programs focusing on such areas as reducing county detention overcrowding, increasing dispositional options for the court, and prevention. With regard to the new initiative, continued funding and participation by a county would be tied to successful achievement of the goal of reducing State commitments and JJC placements, along with the programs' ability to adequately address the goals of public safety, offender accountability and rehabilitation.

*C) Establish a specially funded interdepartmental program development effort to plan for and develop high priority programs for select special needs populations who are under the jurisdiction of the JJC as juvenile offenders.*

Many of the special needs juveniles placed under the care and supervision of the Juvenile Justice Commission present a *combination* of needs that extend beyond any one agency's area of expertise, budgetary capabilities and available resources. As a result, the JJC recommends an ongoing special interagency appropriation tied to a collaboration, planning and program development effort for special needs juvenile offenders which would improve the juvenile justice system's ability to deflect this population from serious and lengthy careers as juvenile and adult offenders. The interdepartmental program would combine the efforts of the Juvenile Justice Commission and the Department of Human Services, in collaboration with the Family Court.

*D) Increase the accessibility of existing JJC noninstitutional beds for youth committed to the Commission.*

Development of the community corrections programming noted earlier would free up

a substantial number of JJC noninstitutional beds by expanding local probation options for judges to access, decreasing the necessity of relying on JJC placements. This strategy could substantially increase the number of JJC noninstitutional beds for committed youth, and improve the Commission's continuum of sanctions and services.

*E) Increase the accessibility of existing JJC day programs for youth committed to the Commission.*

Counties would be encouraged to use funds provided through the community corrections program noted above and the Partnership Program, to create day treatment programs/day reporting centers serving as alternatives to State incarceration and as detention alternatives. Development of these alternatives would free up a substantial number of existing JJC day program slots to be utilized for transitional purposes, further preparing committed youth for their return to the community, and step-up programs to provide additional supervision of select youth under JJC Aftercare/Parole supervision.

*F) Enhance the JJC Classification process for placing and moving committed youth within the JJC custody system.*

The JJC is in the process of instituting a structured (objective) classification system to help ensure fair, consistent and appropriate placement of youth who have been committed to the JJC by the court. The plan is in its initial stages, with the Commission currently piloting an objective classification instrument for future implementation.

*G) Modify current practice of returning juvenile parole violators to the New Jersey Training School for Boys while they await probable cause and parole revocation hearings.*

A process would be developed to identify those juvenile parole violators currently returned to the NJTSB who can be safely placed in a noninstitutional setting pending a

determination on revocation of parole status.

*II. Enhance the JJC's Ability to Address the Security, Safety and Rehabilitative Needs Presented by Its Special Needs and Other Underserved Populations.*

There is a need for redeploying resources within the JJC to address special needs populations. Enhancement is required regarding development of specialized units within the JJC. Some portion of the initiatives recommended below would involve joint interdepartmental efforts: planning, funding, and program development and provision. Also needed is the provision of enhanced specialized counseling/treatment services within existing JJC settings.

Strategies related to enhancement of special needs programming include:

*A) Create: a) a thirty-two bed noninstitutional special needs complex; and b) 8 to 16 self-contained beds within a secure setting.* Both initiatives would serve juveniles with moderate to severe mental health needs, intellectual deficits, problems presenting special vulnerability issues, and/or severe learning disabilities. The special interdepartmental funding mechanism could be utilized to implement this recommendation.

*B) Create twenty noninstitutional beds for select juvenile sex offenders (8 beds for older juvenile sex offenders and 12 step-down beds) to expand the existing limited range of programming within the JJC.* The special interdepartmental funding mechanism could be utilized to implement this recommendation.

*C) Implement a comprehensive substance abuse screening and assessment procedure for all juveniles entering the JJC for the purpose of determining the extent and nature of substance abuse treatment/counseling needs of each youth, and further determining needs for the overall JJC population to direct future program development.*

D) *Create fifty-seven noninstitutional specialized substance abuse treatment beds (40 beds duplicating the JJC's Campus Program for males, 10 beds to provide gender specific long-term treatment for female substance abusers, two relapse beds for females, and five beds for mentally ill and chemically addicted juveniles).* These programs could be operated by JJC or a contracted provider. The special interdepartmental funding mechanism could be utilized to implement some portion of this recommendation.

III. *Enhance JJC Institutional and Noninstitutional Programs to Better Achieve Safety, Security and Rehabilitative Goals.*

Since its inception, the JJC has implemented various initiatives to enhance existing programming in its facilities and programs (institutions, and noninstitution residential and day programs). In addition, the JJC began operating its Stabilization & Reintegration Program (juvenile boot camp) in February 1996. Despite these efforts, there is a further identified need for program development and improvement. Without such continued program development, full realization of the JJC's mandate, with reference to public safety, offender accountability and offender rehabilitation, is hindered. The Commission would undertake a detailed "program review and needs assessment" process. This process would assess existing staffing, existing interventions and curricula, and diagnostic/assessment capacity, and various "infrastructure" needs.

Required strategies include:

- A) *Increase staffing as extent and nature of need is identified.*
- B) *Expand staff training to facilitate staff development and achievement of program goals.*
- C) *Supplement existing staff by hiring more credentialed professional staff and/or*



*securing needed professional services through contracts.*

D) *Better match programming and services with the juvenile offenders under the JJC's jurisdiction.*

E) *Expand JJC involvement of family members in its interventions with youth served in its facilities and programs.*

IV. *Develop, Staff, and Fund a JJC Training Academy.*

The Academy would provide needed training for JJC operations, education and Aftercare/Parole Services staff members.

V. *Enhance Program Development Efforts Through Ongoing and Integrated Research, Evaluation and Planning.*

This would include more systematic monitoring and evaluation of the performance of JJC facilities and JJC Aftercare/Parole, as well as the JJC administered State/Community Partnership Grant Program.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

I. *Efforts should be made within the public school setting to identify as early in their educational careers as feasible, those students who are at high risk of entry into the juvenile justice system, including those who have begun to exhibit various problem behaviors that appear correlated with subsequent delinquency. Identified high risk students should be comprehensively assessed to identify problem areas or needs that may be addressed by early intervention efforts.*

Research indicates that youth at risk of future involvement in delinquency and related problem behaviors can often be identified at a fairly early age. Early identification of the needs of juveniles and their families, when combined with appropriate intervention

efforts provide a cost effective strategy relative to the costly juvenile justice responses of incarceration at the county and State level. The public school is best situated to assess the existence of such needs and to facilitate efforts to secure early intervention services to address identified needs to the extent feasible.

Significantly, an estimated two-thirds of the JJC population reside in one of the 28 ~~Abbott~~ districts. The systematic preschool and early intervention efforts planned in these districts hold great promise of impacting the problem of serious and violent youth crime in New Jersey.

*II. The Family Court, with the support of the Administrative Office of the Courts, should implement an early assessment and early intervention program targeting high risk juveniles charged with or adjudicated on delinquency offenses for special interventions addressing identified needs. This would include an enhancement of existing data gathering and information sharing practices, development of risk and needs assessment instruments, and a protocol for use of relevant information in court decision making.*

Accumulated research has demonstrated that instruments can be developed to identify high risk populations early, when the juveniles are young and have not yet committed serious crimes. There is a clear need for enhanced data gathering and information sharing practices by the court *early on in youths' court careers* to inform court decision making. This information would allow the court to better assess youths' risk of subsequent offending and to better assess youths' needs.

There is strong evidence to expect that systematic evaluation of juveniles' risk of re-offending (along with identifying *and* addressing relevant needs) after a second involvement with the Family Court would be a cost effective and valuable tool for the court to help

prevent subsequent serious and chronic offending.

### *III. Reforming Juvenile Detention*

Detention Reform Project data show that a lack of sufficient detention alternatives and a lack of space in detention alternative programs that already exist continue to contribute to detention overcrowding. It is important that counties determine their current program needs and develop appropriate detention alternative programming options accordingly.

Project findings also indicate that, when making detention and retention decisions, juvenile justice decision makers weigh heavily their understanding of the level of supervision and stability in a youth's home. As a result, a significant number of youth are placed and remain in secure detention facilities due to the real or perceived inadequate supervision and/or family instability. But for this fact, these youth might otherwise avoid such placement.

Additional results indicate that probation violators comprise a large portion of the secure detention population in some counties. Their placement in secure detention facilities is, in part, due to a lack of available options (e.g., graduated sanctions) in the community.

*A) Counties should determine specific needs across a potential range of detention alternative programs, and develop appropriate options as needed.*

This array of detention alternative programs should be seen as a necessary adjunct to a county's secure detention resources. The purpose of such detention alternatives should be to make options available to judges which provide varying levels of supervision and structure in the community short of placement in secure detention facilities. This

would help match available alternative programs to the levels of risk posed by juveniles who come before the court.

*B) Counties should develop, as needed, select detention alternative programs to avoid placement of youth in secure detention facilities who would avoid such placement if not for family instability or related family issues. Specifically, shelter care, host homes, group homes and highly structured day reporting programs, could serve to provide degrees of supervision that might be required for such juveniles short of placement in secure detention.*

*C) County efforts should be undertaken to avoid placement in secure detention, where appropriate, of youth solely as a response to a violation of probation.?*

This can be accomplished in part through the development of a system of graduated sanctions short of placement in secure detention available to probation officers as a response to probationer failure to abide by conditions of their probation.

*IV. Provide to Juvenile Probation Services funding necessary to enhance achievement of system goals. Such enhancements should include: increased probation funding to provide for more probation officers and the capacity to expand and enhance existing community service programs; development of a greater array of graduated sanctions available to probation officers; and expansion and improvement of services for use by probation officers.*

Broad acknowledgment exists regarding a need to reduce existing Juvenile Probation caseloads to better achieve both public safety and rehabilitative goals. There is also a serious lack of sanctions and services available to officers that could be utilized with probationers. The lack of community-based graduated sanctions contributes to the filing of violations of probation charges when they might otherwise be avoided.

*V. In an effort to expand dispositional options, the availability of community service*

*opportunities for juveniles under probation supervision should be increased.*

Ordering juvenile offenders to perform community service activities is a widely used disposition of the court, as a sole disposition or in combination with other components of a disposition (e.g., probation). However, judges and other court representatives report that community service remains an underutilized court resource. This is so, in part, due to the fact that staff shortages serve as a barrier to juvenile probation departments' ability to adequately coordinate community service programs, to develop adequate sites, and to provide the needed supervision.

*VI. In an effort to expand dispositional options, the usefulness of contracted programs for and accessibility by the Family Court should be improved, with the purpose of ensuring that funded programs are responsive to juvenile justice system needs.*

There is widespread agreement that judges continue to have limited community-based dispositional options (sanctions and services) for juveniles adjudicated on delinquency charges. Judges must typically choose between ordering probation supervision and ordering placement/commitment with the JJC or other State agencies. Increased community-based dispositional options (sanctions and services) would enhance judges' ability to match juveniles to the most appropriate court response.

*VII. In an effort to expand dispositional options, the Juvenile Justice Commission, Department of Human Services, Department of Health and Senior Services, Department of Labor and AOC Juvenile Probation Services should develop agreements to provide multi-agency interventions and collaboration on behalf of juveniles adjudicated delinquent for whom they share responsibility. This collaboration in individual cases should help ensure that juveniles with cross agency needs receive the benefits and most appropriate services currently available through each department.*

The JJC, each of the divisions within the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Juvenile Probation Service, Department of Health and Senior Services and the Department of Labor, and local school districts have expertise in working with certain juvenile populations. Each agency provides specific services to juveniles. Each has its own discrete mission, function and identified client population. However, the needs of court-involved juveniles typically extend beyond the boundaries of any one agency.

Additional collaborative mechanisms can help judges match juveniles' needs for sanctions and services with dispositional resources, and can help agencies access much needed aftercare services, as well as avoid the need to duplicate services.

*VIII. Efforts should be made to include families, particularly parents/caregivers in the intervention efforts provided to court involved families.*

New Jersey's Juvenile Code emphasizes the importance of families in considering the handling of juvenile cases before the court. The Code also provides for involvement of the family as a dispositional option for judges. Despite the family focus of the Code, the court and other components of the juvenile justice system often respond to the offending juvenile in isolation, with limited attention to the family.

*IX. Overall supervision of Juvenile/Family Crisis Intervention Units (JFCIUs) should remain with the Administrative Office of the Courts. The AOC is encouraged to strengthen statewide standards for JFCIUs, and to request funds to set up a grant program to encourage agencies outside of the Family Court to develop JFCIU related programs and services to bring every county up to a minimum level of staffing and services. It is suggested that the planning for the JFCIU programs funded through these grants be part of the Comprehensive Youth Services Plan developed biennially by each County Youth Services Commission.*

Research indicates that funding, operation, staffing and effectiveness of JFCIUs vary

greatly across counties. There is also an indication that JFCIUs operated outside of the judiciary operate in a somewhat more effective manner than do those under the direct management by the courts. Despite such disparities across counties, JFCIUs have proven their value as a necessary part of the juvenile justice system.

*X. Develop career and employment opportunities for juveniles in the juvenile justice system by strengthening linkages between the Department of Labor, County Workforce Investment Boards, private industry and Juvenile Probation Services and JJC noninstitutional units, institutions and Aftercare/Parole Services.*

Many of the juveniles involved with the juvenile justice system need jobs. They need instruction in the skills necessary to seek out, secure and maintain employment. They need exposure to and guidance about career opportunities that exist within the State of New Jersey. Most importantly, these young adults need assistance in being connected with a job and supportive coaching/mentoring to help them become valuable employees.

Efforts should be undertaken to implement or expand curricula within traditional schools, alternative schools and juvenile justice system programs, including JJC programs, that will instruct juveniles in job readiness skills and facilitate career exploration opportunities.

*XI. Develop systematic efforts by the juvenile justice system and related agencies to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of existing programming. This identification of what works will enhance funding decisions as well as decisions regarding program replication.*

Government is increasingly being asked to show results with regard to its use of taxpayer dollars. There is general agreement regarding the need to examine and better determine what works with regard to juvenile justice system programs. Greater knowledge is required regarding programs effectiveness and efficient use of scarce juvenile

justice resources. Such research and evaluation is needed to facilitate decisions regarding budgetary allocations and authorizations for the development, replication and implementation of promising and effective programs and interventions.



## INTRODUCTION

This is the first Master Plan developed by the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (Commission or JJC). The Commission was established as the single agency of State government to lead Governor Whitman's reform of the juvenile justice system. The Commission was statutorily created in December 1995 to respond to findings of the Governor's Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice that had reported a lack of centralized authority for planning, policy development and service provision in the juvenile justice system (N.J.S.A. 52:17B-169 et seq.) Specifically, the Governor's Council noted that the juvenile justice system was not effectively responding to issues relating to: 1) offender accountability; 2) the need for comprehensive programming at the local and State levels that provide an adequate range of placement options for at risk youth, special offender populations and, the most serious and violent offenders; 3) minority overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system; and 4) uncoordinated planning and implementation of sanctions and services, and funding fragmentation at the local and State levels (Report of the Governor's Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice, December, 1994 page 20). The Governor's Advisory Council recommended the creation of,

... a new juvenile justice system in New Jersey that provides a process for dealing more effectively with both the serious and violent offender and the broader range of less violent offenders that comprise the majority of New Jersey's court involved youth. The focus is on a balanced approach to juveniles who have already entered the system as well as preventive measures to help at-risk juveniles avoid the courtroom door. A key element in the overall Advisory Council approach is the involvement of local government, communities and the private sector. Only with their cooperation

can New Jersey establish a more effective and efficient strategy to address delinquency (Report, page 20).

The Commission, which is in but not of, the Department of Law and Public Safety, is comprised of an Executive Board, Advisory Council and Executive Director. The Executive Board is chaired by the Attorney General and includes the Commissioners of Corrections, Human Services, and Education, the Administrative Director of the Courts, the Chair of the Juvenile Justice Commission Advisory Council and two members who are Chairs of their County Youth Services Commissions. The Executive Board formulates policy and directs the work of the Commission (N.J.S.A. 52:17B -170 to 172).

The Advisory Council consists of the Commissioners of the Departments of Labor, Health, Community Affairs, Personnel, the Public Defender, a county prosecutor, and nine members appointed by the Governor and the Legislature. It is charged with advising the Executive Director regarding the implementation of juvenile justice reform, including the Master Plan, the integration, coordination and collaboration of programs, services and sanctions for juveniles, and action to be taken to increase public awareness of the juvenile justice system and its needs.

The Executive Director directs the daily operations of the Commission. The newly established Juvenile Justice Commission was also charged with implementing several new initiatives which had been recommended by the Governor's Advisory Council, including the development of a State/Community Partnership Grant Program to grant funds to counties, through County Youth Services Commissions, to deliver front and back end services and sanctions to at-risk and court involved youth; the implementation of a residential boot camp (Stabilization and Reintegration Program or SRP) for committed youth with a structured aftercare component; the development of a completely new Aftercare/Parole system for

juveniles who have completed their commitment to the Juvenile Justice Commission and are returning to their community on parole; and the development of a sex offender initiative to provide the appropriate level of security and treatment and, where appropriate, to prevent more serious and repetitive offending.

The Master Plan expresses, on the part of the Commission, a commitment to: 1) providing a safe living environment for New Jersey's men, women and, particularly, its children; 2) ensuring that juvenile offenders are held accountable for their law breaking; and 3) providing to juveniles opportunities for personal growth and skill development through rehabilitative efforts and prevention services.

Finally, a Facility Master Plan will contribute to the implementation of aspects of the present Plan. The present Master Plan will assist in guiding future JJC facility and program development, siting and use. An RFP process is under way to select a vendor to develop the Facility Plan.

## **THE JUVENILE JUSTICE MASTER PLAN PROCESS**

Among the responsibilities of the Commission is the preparation of an annual Master Plan. The Commission's enabling legislation sets forth the scope of the Plan. N.J.S.A. 52:17B-170 directs the development of a master plan,

which identifies facilities, sanctions and services available to juveniles adjudicated or charged as delinquent and juvenile delinquency prevention programs and which identifies additional needs based upon the extent and nature of juvenile delinquency and the adequacy and effectiveness of available facilities, services and sanctions.

In response to the legislative directive, the Commission utilized a multifaceted strategy to gather information that provided a comprehensive view of the juvenile justice system, including gains made toward advancing the goals of the Governor's Advisory

Council and efforts still to be made. An initial data collection effort included gathering recent statistical information on: population, arrests, court and detention data, and judicial commitments of juveniles.

Various departments of State government with responsibility to provide specific services to youth were asked to respond to surveys. The Departments of Human Services, Health and Senior Services, Education, Labor and Community Affairs were asked to identify specific programs for youth administered by their departments and to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs in meeting their target populations. In addition, the Comprehensive County Youth Services Plans for 1998-1999 were reviewed for identified system service gaps and needs.

Within the Juvenile Justice Commission, surveys were distributed to, and meetings were held with, staff in all organizational units. Staff were asked to provide information on gaps, needs, strengths and weaknesses within both the Commission's facilities and programs, and the broader juvenile justice system.

To solicit information and opinions from juveniles and their parents who are consumers of the juvenile justice system and its services, surveys were distributed to Youth Services Commission (YSC) Coordinators in eight counties, and JJC regional Aftercare/Parole Services staff. The YSC Coordinators were asked to randomly select a cross-section of juveniles and their parents who were court involved, participants in prevention or dispositional services funded through the JJC's State/Community Partnership Grant and Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention programs. Regional Aftercare/Parole Services staff interviewed juveniles and their parents paroled from JJC institutions and noninstitutional programs.

Three regional meetings were held throughout the State to solicit input from key

actors within the judicial and executive branches of State and county governments, public and private agencies, organizations, groups and service providers who interface with the juvenile justice system. Contributions to the plan were also requested of the JJC Advisory Council and Executive Board.

A significant amount of valuable information was gathered during the process. It is noteworthy that throughout the process, issues similar to those identified by the Governor's Advisory Council continue to be of critical concern to juvenile justice system professionals. There was a commonality of responses regarding existing service gaps and needs and suggestions for improvement. These are reflected herein.

The Plan is presented in three sections. Part I includes an examination of the nature and extent of the juvenile delinquency problem in New Jersey, along with providing a perspective regarding the causes of delinquency; an examination of issues confronted by the juvenile justice system; and a review of key components and processes of the system, along with juvenile justice system data and trends. The discussion addresses such issues as: the importance of prevention and early intervention efforts; the system's inadequate response to juveniles with special needs; the problem of minority confinement; the need for greater interagency coordination; and the need for additional dispositional options.

Part II presents a view of the Juvenile Justice Commission. This includes a description of its key components and initiatives, relevant Commission data and trends, and issues confronting the Commission.

Part III presents recommendations to address Commission issues and recommendations for improvement of the broader juvenile justice system.

Finally, the Commission would like to thank all who contributed in a multitude of ways to the preparation of this Juvenile Justice Master Plan.

## **THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE DELINQUENCY PROBLEM**

Juvenile delinquency, or youth crime, is recognized as a major social problem in our society. In New Jersey, as elsewhere, juveniles are responsible for a large share of the total amount of crime. They commit a wide range of offenses, many of which might be considered relatively minor, for example, various forms of criminal mischief such as defacing a building with spray paint, trampling a neighbor's garden, or shoplifting a pair of jeans or articles of makeup. Others, although less common, are more serious, including auto theft, drug dealing, and violent offenses such as aggravated assault, robbery and murder.

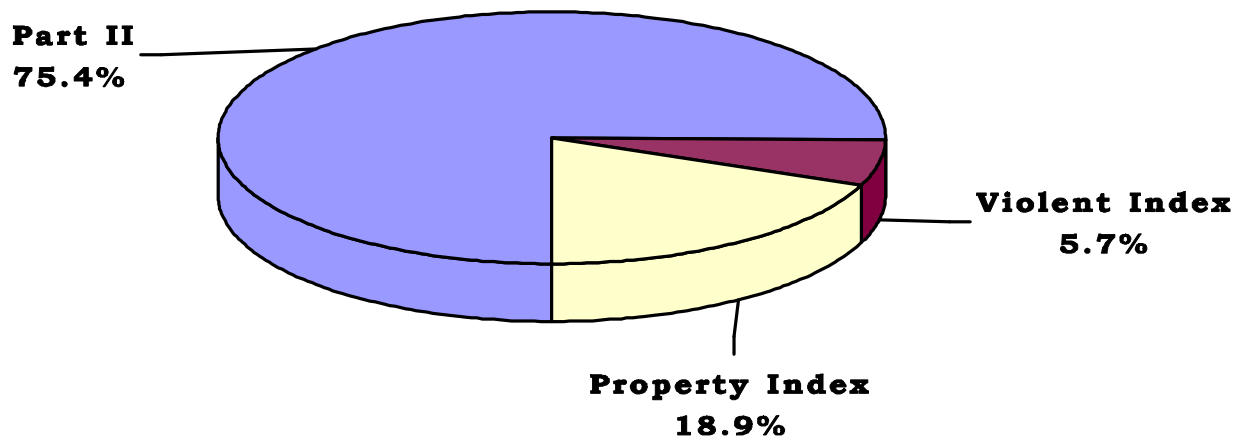
While delinquency is a constant problem, its specific nature, as well as the extent to which delinquent acts occur, changes over time. Official record information, juvenile arrest and Family Court data, are used below to examine the current reality of delinquency in New Jersey, as well as recent trends. This information does not provide a comprehensive and fully accurate account of delinquent behavior among youth in New Jersey, however. Many delinquent acts go undetected (and unreported); even if a youth is apprehended, the police may decide, typically in less serious cases, not to arrest; many who are arrested are not referred to Family Court. Likewise, this data cannot fully measure changes in the nature and extent of delinquency. Increases and decreases in arrests over time may be more a reflection of policy decisions or the practices of police departments than actual changes in juvenile lawbreaking. The data provided below, however, provide the most systematic view of delinquency that is available in New Jersey.

### **Juvenile Arrests in New Jersey**

Juvenile arrests reported in the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) published yearly by the State Police provide the best available estimation of the nature and extent of delinquency in New Jersey. According to the UCR, there were 83,417 juvenile arrests in

1997. Index offenses (generally the more serious offenses) accounted for 24.6% of all juvenile arrests. This included 4,745 arrests (5.7%) for the violent Index offenses of murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault and 15,773 arrests (18.9%) for the property Index offenses of burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. Part II offenses comprise the remainder of the offenses leading to arrest. These range from relatively minor offenses, such as disorderly conduct or malicious mischief to weapons offenses, drug abuse violations

### **Juvenile Arrests by Type of Offense, 1997**



and sex offenses other than rape.

It is further useful to examine juvenile arrests within the context of overall juvenile population. The figures below reflect the number of juvenile arrests per 1,000 juveniles, ages 10 to 17 in New Jersey. The estimated statewide number of juveniles in this age range in 1997 was 845,725.

The overall 1997 juvenile arrest rate was 98.6 arrests per one thousand youth, or nearly one arrest for every 10 youth. Note, however, that a particular juvenile can be arrested more than once in a year and counted multiple times in the arrest rate statistics. For specific offense types, the arrest rates were as follows: Part II offenses, 74.4; Index

offenses, 24.3; property Index offenses, 18.7; and violent Index offenses, 5.6. See Table 1, for a breakdown of arrest rates by county. Note that county arrest rates can be affected by temporary and seasonal population shifts. For example, increased population in beach and entertainment areas during the summer months often leads to corresponding increases in juvenile arrest rates which are based on year round population.

### **The Juvenile Share of the Crime Problem**

Juvenile arrests have historically accounted for a large share of all arrests in New Jersey and across the country. In 1997, juveniles accounted for 18.6% of all arrests, and an even greater share of arrests for Index offenses, 28.9%. More specifically, juveniles accounted for 30.7% of arrests for property Index offenses and 24.3% for violent Index offenses.

Juveniles' contribution to the crime problem, measured solely in terms of arrests, varies greatly from offense to offense. For certain offenses, juveniles account for a majority of arrests: they accounted for 58.3% of all arson arrests, and 52.6% of arrests for criminal/malicious mischief. In addition, they accounted for 46.9% of arrests for motor vehicle theft, 34.4% for robbery, 31.5% for burglary, and 29.9% for weapons offenses. In contrast, juveniles contributed a smaller share of arrests for other offenses, for example, gambling (10.5%), murder (13.3%), and drug abuse violations (15.8%), and fairly trivial shares of some others (e.g., driving under the influence, fraud, vagrancy, and forgery/counterfeiting).

Note that arrest figures may exaggerate somewhat the role of juveniles (vs. adults) in the overall crime problem in New Jersey. Juveniles are more likely than adults to commit crimes in groups (e.g., three juveniles involved in an aggravated assault equals one crime but three arrests).





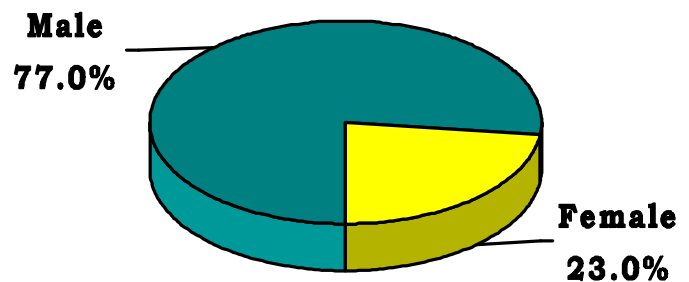
### **Most Prevalent Types of Delinquent Activity**

The offenses for which juveniles were most commonly arrested in 1997 were: larceny-theft (14.2%), drug abuse violations (12.5%), disorderly conduct (10.7%), simple assault (9.4%), and criminal/malicious mischief (6.6%). Together they accounted for more than half (53.4%) of all juvenile arrests. An additional five (liquor law violations, burglary, aggravated assault, receiving stolen property, and weapons) combined with the above to account for more than two-thirds (70.2%) of all juvenile arrests.

### **The Demographics of Arrest -- 1997**

Age, gender, race/ethnicity, and location of arrest are important characteristics to consider when examining juvenile arrests.

#### **Juvenile Arrests by Gender, 1997**



**DEMOGRAPHI**

**CS OF**

**JUVENILE**

**ARRESTS**

**Age.** Older youth typically contribute a disproportionate share of juvenile arrests.

- ?? In 1997, seventeen-year-olds accounted for 26.0% of all juvenile arrests. Fifteen to seventeen-year-olds accounted for 67.8% of juvenile arrests.
- ?? Focusing solely on violent Index offenses, 17 year-olds contributed a 27.0% share of all juvenile arrests for these offenses; the 15 to 17 year-old age group combined for 70.4% of these arrests.
- ?? Juveniles 12 and younger accounted for 9.9% of all juvenile arrests and 7.9% of arrests for violent Index offenses.

**Gender.** A large majority of juveniles arrested were males, especially those arrested for the more serious and violent offenses.

- ?? In 1997, males accounted for 77.0% of all juvenile arrests. This included 83.7% of all juvenile violent Index offenses. Females, therefore, accounted for 23.0% of all juvenile arrests, and a lesser portion (16.3%) of arrests for violent Index offenses.
- ?? The most common offenses for males were drug abuse violations (14.5%), larceny/theft (12.2%), disorderly conduct (11.0%), simple assault (8.4%), and criminal/malicious mischief (7.7%). These comprised 53.7 % of all male juvenile arrests.
- ?? The most common offenses for females were larceny-theft (20.9%), simple assault (12.7%), disorderly conduct (9.9%), drug abuse violations (5.8%), and liquor law violations (5.6%). These comprised 54.8% of all female juvenile arrests.

**Race/Ethnicity.** Minority youth comprised 33.1% of the under 18 population according to the 1990 U.S. Census, with White non-Hispanic youth accounting for 66.9%.

- ?? White youth (both Hispanic and non-Hispanic) accounted for 59.4% of juvenile arrests. They accounted for a slightly lower share of arrests for Index offenses (55.6%) and 42.0% of arrests for violent Index offenses.
- ?? African American youth accounted for 39.5% of all juvenile arrests. They accounted for a slightly higher share of arrests for Index offenses (42.6%) and were involved in

nearly six in ten (57.3%) arrests for violent Index offenses.

- ?? Hispanic youth accounted for 13.5% of all juvenile arrests, including 12.5% of Index arrests and 15.9% of violent Index arrests.
- ?? For White youth, the most common arrest categories were larceny-theft (14.3%), disorderly conduct (10.9%), drug abuse violations (10.8%), simple assault (8.6%), and criminal/malicious mischief (8.3%). These categories comprised 52.9% of all arrests for White juveniles.
- ?? For African American youth, the most common arrest categories were drug abuse violations (15.2%), larceny-theft (13.5%), disorderly conduct (10.7%), simple assault (10.6%), and stolen property (4.5%). These categories comprised 54.4% of all arrests for African American youth.
- ?? For Hispanic youth, the most common arrest categories were disorderly conduct (11.6%), larceny-theft (11.2%), drug abuse violations (11.2%), simple assault (9.1%), and criminal/malicious mischief (5.2%). These categories comprised 48.4% of all arrests for Hispanic juveniles.

### **Where Do Juvenile Arrests Occur?**

While juvenile arrests occur throughout the State, a disproportionate share of juvenile arrests occur in select counties and urban areas. This disproportionality is small when overall arrests are considered. However, this pattern is substantial when serious and violent offenses are considered as serious and violent crime is largely (although not uniquely) an urban phenomenon.

- ?? Six counties (in order of number of arrests), Essex, Camden, Bergen, Union, Monmouth, and Hudson accounted for 49.1% of all juvenile arrests in 1997, while comprising an estimated 46% of the youth population in New Jersey. In contrast, six other counties, Somerset, Cape May, Sussex, Salem, Warren, and Hunterdon, accounted for 9.0% of the total; these latter six counties comprised an estimated 10% of the youth population.
- ?? The concentration of arrests is most evident for violent Index offenses. Together, the six counties of Essex, Hudson, Camden, Passaic, Bergen, and Atlantic accounted for 60.3% of all juvenile arrests for these serious violent offenses, while comprising an estimated 41% of the youth population. Essex and Hudson alone accounted for 34.3% (and 16% of the youth population). In contrast, only 5.7% were in the six counties of Cape May, Somerset, Warren, Sussex, Salem, and Hunterdon, with 10% of the youth population.

- ?? The six most populated cities in New Jersey (the "Big 6"), Camden, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson, and Trenton, accounted for 14.3% of the 10 to 17 population in New Jersey according to the 1990 Census figures. In contrast, for 1997, these six cities comprised 17.4% of total arrests, 29.8% of violent Index arrests, and 33.0% of drug violations among juveniles.

### **Arrest Trends Over Time**

In recent years, the media, along with many criminal justice professionals, have presented a gloom and doom scenario for the near future with regard to burgeoning youth crime, especially youth violence. Such predictions have been fanned by substantial growth in youth violence beginning in the late 1980s, alongside projected moderate increases in the youth population in the 1990s and into the 21st century. While there has been a clear upward trend since the late 1980s, at least for youth violence (over the last ten years), the expected acceleration in the growth of the youth violence problem during the second half of the 1990s has not materialized. Instead, youth violence has decreased over the last few years across the country. The experience in New Jersey has closely paralleled the national trends, including both the rise in youth crime between the late 1980s and 1994, and the more recent declines. No one can tell with any certainty whether the recent declines reflect a temporary interruption of an on-going upward trend or the beginning of a long-term trend downward in youth violence. It is likely neither. It may well be that youth violence has been descending from these especially high levels and will soon stabilize for some period of time.

Juvenile population projections and arrest trends (see Charts 1 and 2) in New Jersey include the following:

- ?? Following a lengthy decline in youth population, the number of juveniles ages 10 to 17 began to increase at the outset of this decade. The Department of Labor projects that there is likely to be a total increase in the youth population (ages 10 to 17) of approximately 16% between 1994 and 2005.

?? Overall, there was a decrease in the number of juvenile arrests in 1997, a 5.1% decrease compared with the prior year. Long-term, there was a fairly steady decline

in juvenile arrests over ten years, i.e., arrests dropped 12.1% between 1988 and 1997.

?? The number of property Index arrests decreased in 1997 as well, an 11.1% decrease compared with the 1996 figure. This included declines in all categories: motor vehicle theft (-18.4%), burglary (-14.1%) and larceny-theft (-9.6%).

?? Property Index arrests also declined over the ten-year period, 1988-1997, by 18.5%. This included decreases in all categories: motor vehicle theft (-52.3%), burglary (-34.6%) and larceny-theft (-7.5%).



- ?? There was also a decline in violent Index arrests of 11.2% from the prior year. This included declines in all categories: robbery (-15.0), murder (-11.5%), aggravated assault (-8.9%) and rape (-5.0%). This was the third straight annual decline in juvenile arrests for these serious violent offenses, a total decline between 1994 and 1997 of 18.5%.
- ?? Over the ten year period, however, the pattern diverges, with arrests for violent Index offenses growing substantially (19.3%). This included increases in robbery (28.6%), murder (24.3%) and aggravated assault (17.5%), alongside a decrease for rape (-25.1%). The increase in arrests for violent Index offenses during the ten year period was experienced between 1988 and 1994, with an increase of nearly half (46.3%) during that period, with declines since 1994.
- ?? Juvenile *arrest rates* have followed a pattern similar to that of the number of juvenile arrests. Overall, juvenile arrests have declined over the last decade while the juvenile population has grown. Significantly, the arrest rate for violent Index offenses in 1997 (5.6 per 1,000 youth 10 to 17) has fallen to a level not seen since the late 1980s; the rate was estimated at 4.9 in 1988. More recently, between 1994 and 1997, the arrest rate decreased from 7.2 to 5.6.

One significant point to note regarding juvenile arrest trends is the different pattern which has emerged for male and female youth.

- ?? Most recently, between 1996 and 1997, male arrests declined 5.6% and female arrests decreased less so (-3.3%). For violent Index offenses, male arrests decreased 12.0%; again, the decrease was less for females (-6.7%).
- ?? Over ten years (1988 to 1997), total juvenile arrests for males declined 16.4%, while females *increased* 6.4%. For violent Index offenses, male arrests increased 14.0% and females increased by more than half (55.9%).

### **A Focus on Juvenile Drug Arrests**

There were 10,400 juvenile drug arrests in 1997. This included 7,193 arrests for possession/use of drugs (69.2% of the total) and 3,207 arrests for drug sales/manufacturing (the remaining 30.8%). The 1997 figure for juvenile drug arrests was a decrease of 3.7% compared with the prior year, the first such decrease since 1991. During the ten year period of 1988 to 1997, drug arrests increased 16.1%; and more recently, between 1993 and 1997, drug arrests increased substantially, by 76.6%.

Statewide, in 1997, African American youth accounted for 48.0% of all drug arrests.



More specifically, they accounted for 36.8% of arrests for possession and 73.1% of arrests for sales. Hispanic youth accounted for 12.2% of all drug arrests, including 11.6% for possession and 13.6% for sales.

The drug most commonly involved in drug sales arrests was cocaine/opium and their derivatives (in 72.0% of the arrests) followed by marijuana/hashish (26.2%). In arrests for drug possession, the most commonly involved drug was marijuana/hashish (74.9%), followed by cocaine/opium and their derivatives (21.5%).

### **Changing Arrest Patterns in the Counties**

Statewide data and trends typically mask substantial differences at the county level. The following provides a county-level look at total juvenile arrests and arrests for violent Index offenses.

#### Total Juvenile Arrests

Juvenile arrests decreased in most counties for 1997 (16 of the 21 counties) compared with the previous year. The greatest decreases occurred in the counties of Ocean (-23.4%), Passaic (-15.4%), Cumberland (-15.3%), Hudson (-14.9%), and Salem (-14.5%). Only five counties had an increase in juvenile arrests. They were Camden (17.0%), Hunterdon (11.5%), Burlington (6.5%), Atlantic (4.7%) and Sussex (1.7%).

Between 1988 and 1997, 14 counties had a decrease in juvenile arrest rates, while seven counties showed an increase. The greatest decreases occurred in Essex (-32.6%), Passaic (-30.1%), Mercer (-29.4%), Middlesex (-24.7%), and Hudson (-22.8%). In contrast, the counties with the greatest increase in juvenile arrests were Camden (51.9%), Atlantic (41.2%), Gloucester (39.7%), Hunterdon (37.4%), and Burlington (23.9%).

#### Arrests for Violent Index Offenses

A total of 12 of the State's 21 counties experienced decreases in juvenile arrests for

violent Index offenses in 1997 compared with the previous year. The greatest decreases were in Somerset (-47.8%), Salem (-36%), Union (-28.1%), Bergen (-24.6%), Hudson (-24.2%), and Passaic (-23.6%) counties. The counties with the greatest increases in violent Index offenses from 1996 to 1997 were Hunterdon (116.7%), Cape May (68.0%), Warren (51.7%), Mercer (34.6%), and Gloucester (28.4%).

Between 1988 and 1997, all but two counties had increases in violent Index offense arrests for juveniles. The greatest increases were in Warren (4300.0%, from 1 to 44), Sussex (200.0%), Cape May (171.0%), Gloucester (147.6%), Ocean (141.4%), and Hunterdon (136.4%) counties. The only counties that experienced a decrease were Essex (-34.8%) and Monmouth (-1.9%).

### **Delinquency Referrals to Family Court**

As noted above, not all arrests on delinquency charges lead to a police referral to Family Court, i.e., a formal police complaint. In 1997, 65.0% of arrests were referred to the court. However, additional delinquency complaints can be referred by sources other than the police, for example, a parent, neighbor or school official. The following court figures are intended to supplement the picture of the nature and extent of delinquency in New Jersey provided by the above section on juvenile arrests.

In New Jersey's Family Court, delinquency complaints entering the court are filed (are docketed and receive docket numbers) by court intake personnel. In calendar year 1997, there were 68,513 cases handled involving new delinquency complaints in the 21 counties. These cases involved 43,543 juveniles charged with 116,252 offenses. This means that some juveniles come before the court on more than one occasion in a year and may be charged with more than one offense. For the 21 counties, this averages 1.6 cases per juvenile; 2.7 charges per juvenile; and 1.7 charges per case.

These court statistics reflect a small decline in juvenile court involvement on delinquency charges in 1997 compared to the prior year. Specifically, delinquency cases referred decreased 4.5%; the number of juveniles referred decreased 3.1%; and the total number of delinquency charges decreased 6.3%.

The number of juveniles and cases entering Family Court on new complaints varies greatly by county. Of the 21 counties, Essex had the greatest number of cases (9,354), charges (17,801), and juveniles (5,748). Hunterdon had the fewest cases (436), juveniles (332), and charges (737).

### **Demographics at Family Court Intake**

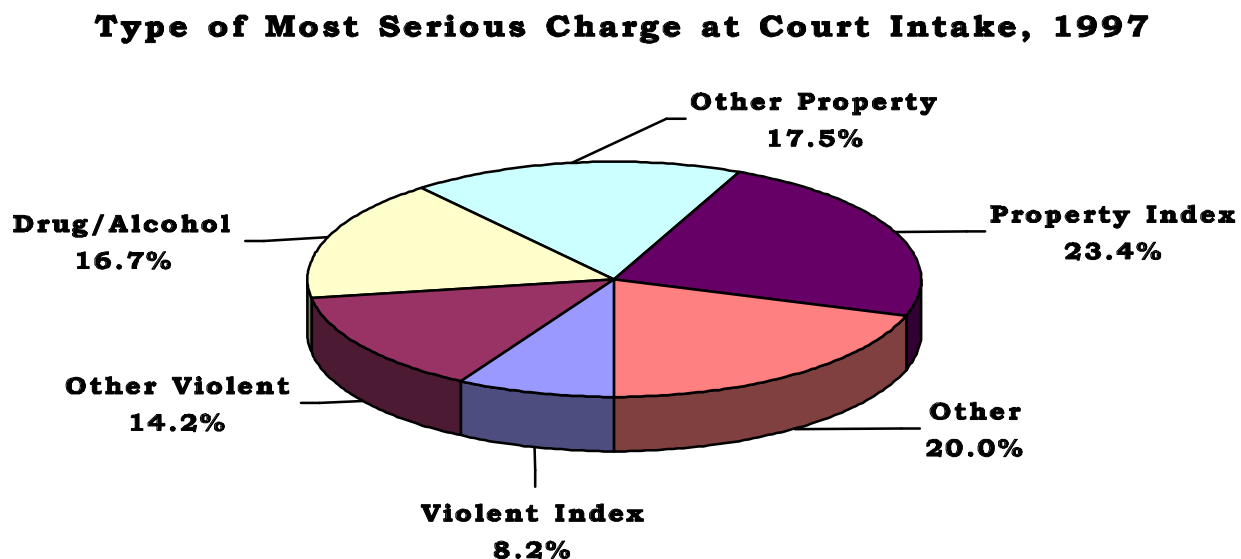
As with juvenile arrests, age, gender and race/ethnicity are important characteristics to examine regarding Family Court involvement.

- ?? Consistent with the distribution of juvenile arrests, juveniles in Family Court are predominantly male. In 1997, males accounted for just over three-quarters (75.2%) of the juveniles entering court on delinquency charges.
- ?? A large majority of youth were in middle to late adolescence at entry into court. The most common age group was 15 to 16 year olds (39.6%). More than three in ten juveniles (32.0%) were 17 years of age or older; and 71.6 were 15 or older. Youth 12 and under comprised 8.7% of the total.
- ?? More than half of the juveniles entering court (54.0%) were minority. This included the following breakdown: African American, 39.0%; Hispanic, 13.1%; Asian, 1.2%; and Other, 0.6%.

### **Charges at Intake**

Juveniles entering court are charged with a wide range of offenses from the most serious, first and second degree offenses, to the least serious, petty disorderly persons (PDP) and disorderly persons (DP) offenses. The five most common charges in delinquency cases (counting most serious charge only) included Shoplifting (DP), 11.0%; Simple Assault (DP), 10.3%; Criminal Mischief, Loss of \$500 or less (DP), 4.7%; Possession of 50 grams or less of marijuana or 5 grams or less of hash (DP), 4.5%; and Improper Behavior (PDP), 4.0%.

Together, these five offenses accounted for 34.5% of all delinquency charges. An additional five offenses, Possession/Consumption of Alcohol in Public (PDP), 3.9%; Burglary (third



degree), 3.3%; Harassment (PDP), 2.8%; Possession of CDS Classified in Schedules I, II, III, IV (third degree), 2.3%; and Aggravated Assault (second degree), 2.2%, increased the figure to practically half (49.0%) of all charges docketed.

Overall, delinquency cases in 1997 varied greatly in seriousness. In a majority of cases, the most serious offense charged was relatively minor. For example, 54.9% involved a disorderly or petty disorderly persons offense as the most serious charge. In contrast, 12.6% involved a first or second degree offense.

An examination of broad types of offense revealed that a minority but significant share of delinquency cases in 1997 involved a violent offense as their most serious charge. A total of 22.4% of the cases entering court involved a violent offense (which includes offenses ranging from simple assault to aggravated sexual assault and murder). A smaller portion of cases (8.2%) included a violent Index offense as the most serious charge.

In addition, more than two-fifths (40.9%) of all cases included a property offense and

16.7% included a drug or alcohol offense as the most serious charge. The remaining cases (20.0%) were categorized as "other"(including a wide array of offenses including offenses against public order and administration; weapons charges are in this category, as are such offenses as disorderly conduct and gambling).

## **THE CAUSES OF DELINQUENCY**

Our understanding of delinquency and our image of juvenile offenders ultimately has significance for the ways that a juvenile justice system will respond to law breaking, and its ability to effectively achieve its goals of public safety, accountability and rehabilitation of offenders. There are many competing perspectives regarding the explanation of delinquency: sociological, psychological and biological explanations, and variations within disciplines. There are also attempts to integrate these perspectives, with some more successful than others. However, while there is agreement on certain aspects of the problem, there is no true consensus.

The following provides one perspective that is useful for, and relevant to, juvenile justice system practice.<sup>1</sup> It emphasizes individual responsibility for delinquent behavior,

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<sup>1</sup>See Aloisi, M. 1984. *Chronological Age and the Differential Impact of Social and Personality Factors in Adolescent Delinquency* (Doctoral Dissertation). Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International; Wilson, J.Q., and R. Herrnstein. 1985. *Crime and Human Nature*. NY: Simon & Schuster; Andrews, D.A., and J. Bonta. 1998. *The Psychology of Criminal Conduct*. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson. For a recent and comprehensive review of risk factors, and their empirical examination to date, see Loeber, R., and D.P. Farrington (eds.). 1998. *Serious & Violent Juvenile Offenders, Risk*

i.e., youth choose to break the law. At the same time, it recognizes a wide range of factors that influence those choices. This approach suggests system interventions that can be targeted to impact young offenders.

### **Deciding to Break the Law**

Juveniles make countless decisions every day, with varying degrees of conscious reflection. Among them, they make decisions to commit or refrain from delinquent acts. These decisions are based on youths' calculation of rewards and costs tied to their behavior in tempting situations. In short, delinquency tends to result when the perceived rewards for breaking the law outweigh the perceived costs. One important task for juvenile justice system interventions is to attempt to impact the balance of rewards and costs in the direction of conformity.

### **Adolescence and Delinquency**

Delinquency is widespread; most youth report having committed at least one delinquent act. In addition, adolescents commit a disproportionate amount of crime; the peak period for serious law breaking appears to be at approximately fifteen and sixteen years of age. Fortunately, most youth who break the law (they may or may not get caught and become an official statistic) stop offending by the time they become young adults, some after a very short period.

Therefore, it is important to look to the adolescent experience to understand delinquency. Significantly, the factors most relevant to the calculation of rewards and costs in tempting situations are largely tied to the immediate world of the adolescent. However, other factors also play an important role. Ultimately, the adolescent's immediate world is

shaped in important ways by earlier positive and negative experiences (particularly in the family) and broader societal forces.

Adolescence is a time of transition and change, growth from the dependency of childhood to the independence of adulthood. Critical changes occur *both* in the youths' social environment, including their relationship to their family, peers, and school (and possibly work), and in their inner world, involving growth in their personality, orientations, cognitive skills and moral development.

### **The Family**

The family can be a great source of strength and personal growth during adolescence. When the family fails to fulfill its role, problem behavior and delinquency are much more likely to emerge. Poor family attachment and a lack of emotional support, and lax parental supervision, are commonly identified risk factors for delinquency and other youth problems. The family also plays an important role earlier in the child's life, with poor child rearing/disciplinary practices interfering with the critical socialization process. Outright neglect and abuse, witnessing domestic violence, and parental substance abuse or criminal involvement can also contribute to delinquency and youth violence, impacting decision making in various ways.

### **The School Experience**

The schools are, for many, a source of self-esteem, a sense of accomplishment and mastery, and a preparation for rewarding adult roles. Success in school is an important basis for motivations to work hard, and a sense that a positive future awaits. This forms a large part of what some have called a stake in conformity. For others, schools are the scene of failure, frustration and a sense of inadequacy that can engender serious and chronic offending. Poor performance in school, a history of disruptive behavior in school, and a

lack of or weak attachment to school are commonly identified risk factors.

### **Peers and Neighborhood Influences**

In adolescence, developing friendships and gaining the respect of peers take on great importance. While peer influences and support are a natural part of growing up, they can be harmful. Delinquent peers may influence youth to get involved with delinquent activities or to experiment with drugs; their approval and recognition can be powerful rewards and motivators for delinquent behavior. Also, delinquency can be learned within a peer or neighborhood subculture that defines various activities, including drug use, as acceptable or desirable. The neighborhood or community context can engender delinquent behavior in a number of ways, e.g., by providing available illegitimate opportunities (e.g., a flourishing drug trade), by failing to provide adequate legitimate economic opportunities; and through an absence of community ties and related informal social controls.

### **Individual Factors**

A number of personality characteristics have been linked to delinquency. These include lack of self-control, low self-esteem and low sense of mastery, limited future orientation, little sense of responsibility for one's actions, and various deficits in cognitive capacities and skills. Some professionals emphasize the role of serious emotional problems in delinquency. While potentially important as contributions to much serious and violent delinquency, the large majority of delinquent youth do not appear to suffer severe mental and emotional problems.

Certain physiological deficiencies can play a role in delinquency decisions. For example, learning disabilities and developmental disabilities, often having a physiological basis, can contribute to delinquency directly or indirectly (by leading to school failure, frustration, loss of interest and attachment to school, and lowered self-esteem).



In summary, adolescents' delinquency involvement is influenced by the combined effects of the types of factors mentioned above. These factors influence the juvenile's calculation of the reward-cost balance in tempting situations, and influence the likelihood that individual youth will find themselves in or get into tempting situations.

A person with strong bonds to parents and school, and a promising future, will have a substantial stake in conformity. Delinquency, if detected, would jeopardize rewarding relationships and anticipated future rewards. Therefore, these factors serve as potential costs of delinquency, and would help deflect a youth from law breaking in the absence of even stronger rewards or motivations (and opportunities) to do so. Inner controls (e.g., prosocial values, ability to defer gratification) can also serve to restrain motivations to delinquency. Performing the delinquent act would be experienced as a cost, in terms of potential guilt feelings or sense of letting oneself down.

Finally, a youth may have a substantial stake in *nonconformity*, with delinquent peers who approve of his or her delinquency, and a thriving drug trade to partake in. In this case, the balance of rewards vs. costs is very likely to tip in the direction of committing delinquent acts, especially if this is accompanied by poor school performance and related low expectations for a good job.

### **Some Implications**

From this perspective, a delinquency control strategy would include attempts to influence the typical reward-cost balance among adolescents. In particular, that means: increasing stake in conformity (e.g., strengthening social bonds to family and school); fostering prosocial values; improving preparation and opportunities for employment; decreasing illegitimate opportunities in communities (including impacting negative peer influences); and holding youth accountable through use of meaningful sanctions, beginning

early in their offending.

The perspective also supports the importance of prevention and early intervention as ways to maximize the development of positive family and school influences. Early identification (and remediation) of school performance difficulties, in particular, would help short-circuit the cycle of failure, frustration and alienation from school that is evident for many youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Ultimately, these efforts serve to protect the public by reducing the amount of minor offending and serious and violent youth crime that might lead to victimization, achieve accountability for offenders (both minor and chronic), and assist in the rehabilitation and skill development needed by a wide range of offenders to move toward a prosocial lifestyle.

## **MOVING THROUGH THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM**

This section provides an overview of several key components of the juvenile justice system in New Jersey, along with recent data and trends. A flow chart describing the juvenile justice process is appended to the end of this section.

### **Arrest/Police Diversion**

A juvenile enters the juvenile justice system when a complaint charging the commission of a delinquent act is signed. Under the Juvenile Justice Code, N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-20 et seq., any person can sign a complaint alleging that a juvenile has committed an act of delinquency. The signing of this complaint can be based on observed or reported behavior. Most frequently, the complaint is signed by a police officer.

A law enforcement officer may take a juvenile into custody when there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile is delinquent. In lieu of signing a delinquency complaint, the officer may divert the case through several means, including releasing the juvenile to a responsible parent or guardian (with or without a reprimand and warning) or conduct a

station house adjustment.

Once a delinquency complaint is signed, a juvenile can be held in a secure detention facility if certain statutory criteria are met. The officer refers the case to court intake service to request admission into detention.

### **Juvenile/Family Crisis Intervention Units**

Juvenile/Family Crisis Intervention Units (JFCIUs) were authorized to divert from court proceedings, matters involving family related problems, e.g., incorrigibility, truancy, runaway and serious family conflict. The JFCIUs provide short-term, crisis intervention services with the goal of stabilizing the family situation and/or referring the juvenile and family to available community agencies. There are substantial differences across counties with regard to the structure and operation of JFCIUs. One significant difference



is that while some counties operate their JFCIU directly through the court, others utilize public or private agencies to fulfill this function.

In calendar year 1997, there were 9,945 juvenile/family crisis cases handled. Most common were cases identified as involving serious family conflict (51.4%) as the primary reason for referral. Cases involving runaways accounted for 15.0%, followed by truancy cases (14.6%) and cases involving a threat to the safety of the juvenile (9.2%). Minor delinquency complaints (i.e., disorderly or petty disorderly persons offenses) accounted for 3.4%, while the remaining 6.4% involved other reasons.

A large majority of cases were disposed solely through telephone contacts (41.4%) or one to two face-to-face counseling sessions (40.3%). In addition, 12.4% required three to five face-to-face sessions while six or more sessions were utilized in 5.9% of the cases.

JFCIUs frequently refer cases to other community agencies when a need for further services is indicated. In 1997, over half (53.4%) of the disposed cases received a referral(s) for at least one family member. A total of 7,473 referrals were made. Among the referrals, 18.2% were to substance abuse programs and 11.4% to DYFS; most (70.4%) were to other

outside agencies.

A major goal of JFCIUs is to divert crisis cases from direct court hearings. They continue to be successful in achieving this goal. In unsuccessful cases, a petition is filed with the Family Court, either when the family crisis situation is considered unresolved after efforts of the JFCIU, and community resources have been exhausted, or when an involuntary out-of-home placement request occurs. In 1997, 12.1% of disposed cases received either a juvenile/family crisis petition (5.6%) or an out-of-home placement petition (6.5%). The involuntary out-of-home placement rate was 7.9 per 100 cases; the rate of voluntary out-of-home placements (agreed upon by the parent/guardian and juvenile) was 3.8 per 100.

### **Court Diversion**

Juvenile Conference Committees (JCCs) and Intake Service Conferences (ISCs) are diversion procedures established by the court and utilized in select first and second offenses of a minor nature. JCCs are comprised of community residents appointed by the court to review certain delinquency complaints. ISCs are conducted by court intake staff to review slightly more serious delinquency allegations. Both diversion procedures occur after delinquency complaints have been signed and filed with the court.

Where a referral is made under statutory guidelines to a JCC/ISC, the committee/intake staff meets with the juvenile and family and recommends conditions to be followed (e.g., restitution to the victim; performing community service; family counseling). If the complainant or victim objects to the recommendations, or if the juvenile or parent(s)/guardian fail to meet their obligations the complaint is referred back to court for a hearing. All charges are dismissed upon successful completion of the conditions set by the JCC/ISC.

In 1997, a total number of 23,755 cases (and 21,365 juveniles) were diverted. Of this total, 48.4% were to JCCs, 45.3% were to ISCs, 0.4% were to JFCIUs, and 5.9% were to specialized diversion programs.

### **Secure Detention**

Secure juvenile detention is the temporary placement of juveniles charged with a delinquent act, in a locked facility, prior to the disposition of their case. New Jersey law mandates that the court can detain juveniles only if they are considered a danger to the community or if they are deemed a risk not to appear in court. (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-34). In addition, some juveniles are detained post-disposition while awaiting program placement. Several counties have also developed a short-term commitment program, which serves as a dispositional option.

In New Jersey, counties are generally responsible for operating and financing detention facilities. The State's role is primarily limited to standard setting, monitoring and technical assistance (through the JJC's Compliance Monitoring Unit which is described infra at page 93) though the JJC does operate one detention center through a contract with the county. For most of 1998 there were 17 secure juvenile detention facilities statewide. The opening of a 12 bed facility in Salem county in September 1998 brings the current total to 18.

### **Admissions**

There were 14,935 admissions to secure county detention facilities in 1997. This was a 1.6% decrease compared with the prior year (see Table 2). A small number of counties accounted for a large share of detention admissions in 1997. Essex, Hudson, and Camden alone accounted for 40.3% of all admissions; more than half (53.7%) of all admissions were made in five counties (the above three plus Passaic and Union).

For the first ten months of 1998, detention admissions continued to decrease. Compared with the same period in 1997, admissions declined by 5.2%.



**TABLE 2**  
**ADMISSIONS TO SECURE JUVENILE DETENTION**  
**1996-1997\***

<b>County</b>	<b>1996 Admissions</b>	<b>1997 Admissions</b>	<b>Percent Change in Admissions 1996-1997</b>
<b>Atlantic</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>-8.2%</b>
<b>Bergen</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>-10.1%</b>
<b>Burlington</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>19.2%</b>
<b>Camden</b>	<b>1,549</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>-2.7%</b>
<b>Cumberland</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>-6.2%</b>
<b>Essex</b>	<b>2,850</b>	<b>2,849</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
<b>Hudson</b>	<b>1,778</b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>-6.6%</b>
<b>Mercer</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>5.2%</b>
<b>Middlesex</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>-1.7%</b>
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>703</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>-9.4%</b>
<b>Morris</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>334</b>	<b>7.4%</b>
<b>Ocean</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>-13.6%</b>
<b>Passaic</b>	<b>997</b>	<b>1,130</b>	<b>13.3%</b>
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>Union</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>2.6%</b>
<b>Warren</b>	<b>674</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>-9.3%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>15,173</b>	<b>14,935</b>	<b>-1.6%</b>

\* Includes juveniles sentenced to detention commitment programs.

## **Detention Demographics**

### Gender

Males continue to comprise a large majority of detained juveniles. In 1997, males accounted for 85.7% of detention admissions. On average, males had a greater length of stay, averaging 26.1 days compared with 13.9 days for females.

### Race/Ethnicity

African American youth accounted for the greatest proportion of admissions, 59.2%, followed by White youth, 21.1%; Hispanic youth, 18.9% and "Other" youth, 0.8%.

## **Average Daily Population**

Statewide average daily population in secure detention facilities was 977.2, a decrease of 5.3% from 1996 (see Table 3). There was a steady increase in average daily population from 1991 through 1996, where it peaked at 1,032, before declining in 1997 (see

Chart 3).



**TABLE 3**  
**AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION IN SECURE JUVENILE DETENTION**  
**1996-1997\***

<b>County</b>	<b>1996 Average Daily Population</b>	<b>1997 Average Daily Population</b>	<b>Percent Change in Average Daily Population 1996-1997</b>
<b>Atlantic</b>	<b>41.9</b>	<b>37.2</b>	<b>-11.2%</b>
<b>Bergen</b>	<b>29.8</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>-9.4%</b>
<b>Burlington</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Camden</b>	<b>75.0</b>	<b>60.2</b>	<b>-19.7%</b>
<b>Cumberland</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
<b>Essex</b>	<b>205.1</b>	<b>211.7</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>12.9</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>23.3%</b>
<b>Hudson</b>	<b>138.5</b>	<b>138.0</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>
<b>Mercer</b>	<b>73.4</b>	<b>45.7</b>	<b>-37.7%</b>
<b>Middlesex</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>47.4</b>	<b>-13.3%</b>
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>63.5</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>-14.6%</b>
<b>Morris</b>	<b>21.6</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>-5.1%</b>
<b>Ocean</b>	<b>39.2</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
<b>Passaic</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>94.9</b>	<b>0.3%</b>
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>26.5</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>-18.1%</b>
<b>Union</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>63.4</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
<b>Warren</b>	<b>26.1</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>-13.8%</b>
<b>State</b>	<b>1032.0</b>	<b>977.2</b>	<b>-5.3%</b>

\* Includes juveniles admitted to juvenile detention commitment programs.

Average daily population continued to decline somewhat in 1998. During the first ten months of 1998, the figure decreased 0.9% compared with the same period in 1997.

### **Length of Stay**

Juveniles vary greatly in the amount of time they remain in secure detention facilities. While some are detained for only a day or two, others remain in detention for months. The statewide average length of stay was 24.4 days in 1997, a 3.1% decrease from 1996.

Average length of stay, however, increased (from 24.4 to 25.0) over the first 10 months of 1998, compared with the same period in 1997, a 2.4% increase. Average length of stay also varies greatly by county. The length of stay in 1997 ranged from highs in Monmouth and Passaic (31 days) and Hudson (30 days) to lows in Warren (13 days) and Sussex (12 days).

Length of stay is affected by the time it takes for cases to be processed through the court, and for post-disposition placements to be made by the JJC, Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) and other state agencies. In addition, the availability of programs that serve as detention alternatives in a particular county can have a substantial impact on average length of stay.

### **Detention Overcrowding**

The New Jersey secure detention system has been consistently overcrowded, i.e., populated at above capacity levels, since early in 1992. Detention overcrowding was relieved somewhat in 1997. Statewide, detention facilities operated at 132.2% of capacity compared with 165.9% of capacity for the prior year. Thirteen of the 17 detention facilities were over capacity for the year in 1997, unchanged from 1996. The reduction in overcrowding in 1997 was due to both a lowering of average daily population (as indicated

earlier) and a growth in secure detention beds.

Detention overcrowding continued to decrease in 1998 (see Table 4). Between January and October 1998, detention facilities were at 119.1% of capacity, a moderate decrease compared with the figure of 134.8% for the same period in 1997. For the ten month period, 11 of the 17 facilities were over capacity.

Total statewide secure detention facility capacity in 1998 was 813 (not counting 12 Salem County beds, an additional 36 beds in Mercer County, and an additional 61 beds that came on line in Middlesex late in the year), an increase of nearly one-third (30.7%) from the figure of 622 in 1996. Currently, in 1999, the statewide capacity is 922 (in 18 facilities); a growth of 48.2% compared with 1996.

## **The Family Court**

### **Court Process**

The Family Court is required to hold hearings for juveniles charged as delinquents, with specific mandated time limitations, particularly regarding juveniles held in secure detention. (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-38). In sequential order, they are as follows:

- ?? An initial detention hearing is to be held within 24 hours of admission.
- ?? For detained juveniles, a probable cause and second detention hearing are to be held within two court days. If probable cause is not found, the juvenile is released from detention pending an adjudicatory hearing.
- ?? Review hearings are held for detained juveniles at intervals of 14 and 21 court days. At each of these hearings, the juvenile's detention status is reconsidered by the judge.
- ?? At the adjudicatory hearing, the court makes a determination on the delinquency charges. A juvenile may be adjudicated delinquent on one or more of the charges; the other charges are dismissed. After an adjudication of delinquency (at that time or at a separate disposition hearing), the judge will order a disposition.
- ?? In detained cases, the disposition hearing is to occur within 60 court days of admission to detention unless extended by the court for good cause.

## **Dispositional Hearings and Options**

The Juvenile Code allows judges a wide array of dispositions in adjudicated cases.

**TABLE 4**

<b>AVERAGE DAILY POPULATIONS AS A PERCENT OF APPROVED CAPACITY IN SECURE JUVENILE DETENTION*</b>			
<b>JANUARY-OCTOBER 1998</b>			
<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>APPROVED CAPACITY</b>	<b>AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION</b>	<b>PERCENT OF APPROVED CAPACITY</b>
<b>Atlantic</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>39.2</b>	<b>178.1%</b>
<b>Bergen</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>29.9</b>	<b>72.9%</b>
<b>Burlington</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>130.4%</b>
<b>Camden</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>71.5</b>	<b>193.2%</b>
<b>Cumberland</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>87.4%</b>
<b>Essex</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>225.0</b>	<b>93.0%</b>
<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>119.3%</b>
<b>Hudson</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>123.3</b>	<b>156.1%</b>
<b>Mercer</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>92.9%</b>
<b>Middlesex</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>128.5%</b>
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>53.8</b>	<b>134.5%</b>
<b>Morris</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>80.4%</b>
<b>Ocean</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>148.3%</b>
<b>Passaic</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>79.2</b>	<b>152.3%</b>
<b>Sussex</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>137.5%</b>
<b>Union</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>155.0%</b>
<b>Warren</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>98.9%</b>
<b>STATE</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>968.5</b>	<b>119.1%</b>

\* Includes juveniles admitted to juvenile detention commitment programs.



(N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-43). They range in restrictiveness from formal continuance (adjournment of formal entry of the case for up to 12 months for the purpose of determining whether the juvenile makes a satisfactory adjustment), fines and restitution, probation supervision, and participation in an in-home or out-of-home treatment program, to the most restrictive disposition, commitment to the JJC for incarceration.

Table 5 provides a breakdown of lead dispositions (the most restrictive of what may be several components of a disposition in adjudicated cases) ordered by the Family Court in calendar year 1997, based on data provided from the Family Court's case tracking system (FACTS).

**TABLE 5**  
**LEAD DISPOSITIONS IN ADJUDICATED CASES, 1997**

<b>Disposition</b>	<b>Percent of Cases</b>
Probation	46.5%
Formal Continuance	17.2%
State Commitment	9.4%
State Commitment (Suspended)	7.7%
Community Service	6.1%
Remedial Non-residential Services (Other than State Programs)	4.1%
Restitution	1.8%
Other Conditional Orders	1.8%
Fine	1.8%
Short Term Commitment	1.0%
Combined Use of Other	2.8%

Dispositions	
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\*Source: Family Automated Case Tracking System

As in the past, the most common lead disposition was probation supervision. Probation was ordered as the most restrictive aspect of dispositions in 46.5% of the cases in 1997. Probation is often ordered along with other dispositional requirements such as performing community service or paying financial restitution. In addition, probation is ordered along with more restrictive requirements such as entering a residential program or undergoing counseling. Probation is a major resource to the Family Court and the juvenile justice system. In 1997, there were 15,077 juveniles under active probation supervision at the end of the year. This represents an increase of 6.6% compared with the previous year. Over a five year period (1993 through 1997), the number of youth under active probation supervision increased by more than one-fifth (20.7%). Four counties (Passaic, Camden, Essex and Middlesex) accounted for more than two-fifths (40.6%) of the juveniles in 1997.

In addition, the average statewide juvenile caseload for probationers in 1997 was 87, an increase of 11.5% from the previous year. Between 1993 and 1997, average caseloads fluctuated greatly, increasing by 2.4% over that five year period.

Formal continuance was the second most frequently used lead disposition (17.2%). This disposition has typically been ordered in over one-quarter of adjudicated cases.

Short of waiving juveniles to the adult system, commitment to the JJC for incarceration is the most severe disposition available to the Family Court. The typical sentence in committed cases is two years, although terms range from 30 days to 20 years or more. State commitment was ordered in 9.4% of the adjudicated cases. Suspended commitment was the lead disposition in an additional 7.7% of the cases. In cases where commitment is suspended, adjudicated youth are often placed on probation and, in

addition, ordered into a JJC noninstitutional residential program.

In addition to their potential for serving important rehabilitation and broader restorative justice goals, ordering juveniles to perform community service and pay restitution or fines are important components of the court's ability to hold them accountable for their delinquent behavior. These requirements are often ordered along with probation supervision. Community service was the lead disposition in 6.1% of the cases while the figure for both financial restitution and fines was 1.8%.

### **Waiver to Adult Court**

Waiver is the practice of transferring jurisdiction over a juvenile from Family Court to adult Criminal Court. (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-26). Once waived, the juvenile is treated in the same manner as an adult. The juvenile can be held in an adult jail and, if found guilty, is subject to the same penalties as an adult. For those sentenced to a term of incarceration, the sentence is served in either an adult or (in some instances) a juvenile facility.

The prosecutor initiates the process by filing a waiver motion; the court then determines probable cause and decides whether or not to waive. A juvenile must be 14 or older at the time of the charged delinquent act to be considered for waiver. Juveniles 14 or older also may elect to have their cases waived to adult court.

In deciding whether or not to waive a juvenile, the court must consider the seriousness of the charge (a number of specific offenses are explicitly listed as waivable), the nature of the circumstances of the charge and the prior record of the juvenile. However, if in any case the juvenile can show that the probability of rehabilitation by the use of the procedures, services and facilities available to the Family Court prior to the juvenile reaching the age of 19 substantially outweighs the reasons for waiver (e.g., seriousness of the offense), waiver will not be granted.

In 1997, there were 231 juveniles waived by the Family Court. Included in the waivers granted statistics are a limited number of cases in which juveniles (subsequent to a prosecutorial waiver motion) voluntarily sought waiver to adult court, and as a result, full waiver proceedings were not required.

Prosecutors sought waiver in a total of 578 cases in 1997. The difference between waivers filed and waivers granted in the same year should not be interpreted as indicating the number of motions that were denied by the court, as some filed waivers may be pending and others may have been withdrawn.

Overall, there was a decrease of 22.5% in the number of waivers in 1997 compared with 1996 (298 granted). The number of waivers sought, however, increased 9.5% compared with 1996.

The number of waivers granted by the court fluctuated over the ten year period of 1988 and 1997 (see Chart 4). Overall, waivers increased dramatically, by 99.1%, during this period. In 1993, waivers reached an all time high (323 granted) before declining. The 1997 figure (231) reflects a return to the 1994 level.

### **Minority Confinement**

According to the 1990 U.S. Census, African American and Hispanic youth accounted for 33% of New Jersey's population under 18 years of age. In 1997, African American youth accounted for 39.5% of all juvenile arrests and 42.6% of juvenile arrests for Index offenses. African American youth accounted for 66.2% of the youth confined in secure juvenile correctional facilities (based on 1998 JJC commitment figures). In 1997 Hispanic youth accounted for 13.5% of all juvenile arrests and 12.5% of juvenile arrests for Index offenses. Hispanic juveniles accounted for 21.3% of the youth confined in secure juvenile correctional facilities in 1998.

Matrices completed over the past few years under the federally funded Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Program determined that African American youth are consistently represented in secure confinement at a rate of almost four times



that of the total at-risk population, and Hispanic youth at a rate of almost one-and-one-half that of the total at-risk population. In 1995, African American and Hispanic youth accounted for 88% of the youth in secure correctional facilities in New Jersey. In 1998 they continued to represent 88% of the youth in secure correctional facilities.

The following quote from the report of the Governor's Advisory Council on Juvenile Justice, suggests several observations regarding the data:

- ?? Minority youth in the system are less likely to come from stable families? Family structure and stability influences decisions to remove young people from their homes.
- ?? The families of minority youth are less likely to be able to afford, or to have insurance to cover the cost of private services. As a result, incarceration often serves as the only feasible available option.
- ?? New Jersey's inner cities, where delinquency problems are most serious, have large minority populations and often have the most limited resources and fewest options available for judges to use in lieu of correctional placement.
- ?? Insensitivity on the part of various system personnel exists with reference to cultural/racial/ethnic differences (Report, page 35).

Chart 5 examines minority/non minority presence at various stages in New Jersey's juvenile justice system and underscores the continuing need to address this issue.





## **MASTER PLAN PROCESS FINDINGS**

Throughout the data collection process, certain general issues and themes were repeated consistently. These topics addressed currently available services and sanctions and further identified system service gaps and needs that participants believed required attention in order to improve the juvenile justice system's effectiveness in responding to questions of public safety and offender rehabilitation needs. The recurring themes were as follows.

### **Prevention and Early Intervention**

Reducing youth violence and crime requires a multifaceted, coordinated approach in which prevention and early intervention are critical first steps. Prevention and early intervention efforts must address a broad spectrum of needs within an individual and needs regarding that individual's relationships to family, school, peers and community.<sup>2</sup> To be successful, prevention strategy must take a community wide approach, create ownership, reach the diverse racial, cultural and socioeconomic groups in the community, include key elected officials, the faith community and grassroots community members and gain the commitment of all stakeholders to a long-term sustained effort.

Those interventions that focus on the family and other core social institutions at the first signs of delinquent behavior are most effective in successfully preventing repetitive patterns of offending, and an escalation to more serious youth crime. Therefore, a long-term, comprehensive strategy for dealing with juveniles, should include early assessment, comprehensive case management, educational advocacy, crisis intervention and built in

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<sup>2</sup>See also Hawkins, J.D., & R.F. Catalano. 1994. *Risk Focused Prevention Using Communities That Care*. Seattle, WA: Developmental Research and Programs.

consequences for misbehavior.

Comprehensive, countywide prevention requires collaboration and resource sharing among public and private organizations and agencies. The importance of involving schools in prevention and early intervention strategies cannot be overemphasized. Education to increase youths' competencies and skills and to impact the serious problems of dropping out of school, suspension and truancy is crucial, especially for urban youth. The schools must interact effectively with community organizations.

Also critical is the development of a system of collaboration between agencies which assures effective and ongoing prevention planning. Interventions with youth just beginning to exhibit problems should focus on both the child and the family. Services include intervening on behalf of families with schools and other systems in order to meet relevant needs; providing needed information and assistance to families; parenting education and training; individual, group and family counseling; truancy, drop out and/or suspension prevention and intervention; recreational activities; cultural and ethnic pride, confidence and self-esteem building; educational assistance; peer counseling; mentoring; and employment assistance.

Parents come to court for help with family crises, truancy and supervision problems because there are not enough alternatives readily accessible in the community. Juvenile Family Crisis Intervention Units (JFCIUs) offer prevention and early intervention strategies in increasingly severe family situations. However, the services provided by JFCIUs tend to be short in duration and insufficiently intense to comprehensively address family problems. Absent comprehensive community-based services, JFCIU staff members can have difficulty successfully referring families to local services which respond in a comprehensive fashion to multiple family issues.

## **Assessment**

Early assessment of juveniles and their families is necessary to implement a comprehensive plan that addresses needs so as to deflect youth from delinquency involvement in the first place, and to avoid the escalation of delinquency into chronic and more serious patterns of delinquent activity. While primary prevention programs provide services to all youth wishing to participate, maximum impact on future delinquent conduct can be achieved by identifying and involving in prevention programs those youth at greatest risk of delinquency. This includes addressing the needs of youth who exhibit known risk factors for future delinquency, drug and alcohol abuse, and youth who have had contact with the juvenile justice system as non-offenders (neglected, abused and dependent or juvenile family crises cases).

Assessment is also critical for those youth who have entered the court system on delinquency charges. Assessment of their risks (of repeated offending) and needs, early in their court careers, is important for targeting the court's response. One approach is to identify *potential* chronic offenders and their particular needs or problem areas, as many juveniles appearing in court have multiple needs. Once these needs have been identified the court has a better opportunity to address them in a timely way, therefore, reducing the likelihood of continued offending and return to court.

## **Dispositional Options in the Communities**

Communities' responsibilities are not limited to the development and implementation of a comprehensive prevention and early intervention strategy. A community continuum of responses must also include sanctions and services for juvenile offenders that provide to the court viable options that are appropriate to a wide range of juvenile offenders. A full range of alternatives should be available and accessible at the county or local level, from

community service to various community-based contracted services, and structured day and residential programs. These alternatives would be responsive to the issue of minority confinement, and would enhance the court's ability to match juveniles to the most appropriate response. Staffing and funding for newly established and existing dispositional options must be adequate to assure that options are available in a timely manner and are effective in responding to public safety and the rehabilitation needs of juveniles.

### **Special Populations**

Communities need to develop dispositional options for juveniles presenting special needs. The level of programming currently available within the community is inadequate to respond to the increasing numbers of youth in the juvenile justice system with special needs. The paucity of community-based programs for special populations is exacerbated by the limitation of resources available through other governmental agencies and departments.

The special needs population includes juveniles with mental health problems, learning disabilities, intellectual limitations and special vulnerability issues. Some of these juveniles have serious learning disabilities that impact on their ability to correctly perceive verbal or visual messages, or their ability to express themselves. Some have intellectual limitations that restrict their ability to understand. Some have mental health disturbances that distort their perceptions. Many of these juveniles have been described by providers of traditional interventions as "just not getting it." Some of these juveniles exhibit fire setting, sexually abusive or substance abusing behaviors. Other populations are special due primarily to their status as groups that are underserved by the juvenile justice system. They include females, youth just entering adolescence, and aging out juveniles. In some cases, these juveniles present a combination of the above special needs.

Failure to routinely and comprehensively identify and provide for the needs of youth

at risk of becoming chronic offenders can lead to the use of sanctions and services that are ill equipped to resolve their problems and modify their behavior. This is particularly true for juveniles with special needs. Dispositional resources that simultaneously provide a combination of sanctions and services meaningful to juveniles within the context of their special needs is necessary in order to respond to the goals of public safety, offender accountability and rehabilitation.

Misassigned special needs youth have often exhausted the traditionally available resources of the child welfare and education systems. Given the multiplicity of their needs and problems in combination with their delinquent behaviors, individual State agencies are often not in a position to provide comprehensively for them. The mental health and developmental disabilities systems are ill equipped to provide for the combination of the juvenile's delinquent behavior and mental health problems and/or intellectual limitations. With each subsequent complaint of delinquency, these juveniles move deeper into the juvenile justice system. Once in the correctional system, there is a lack of ready access to services to adequately address their rehabilitative needs.

### **Juvenile Offenders With Mental Health Problems**

Within the juvenile justice system, there is a significant number of juveniles who manifest mild to severe mental health problems and needs. These juveniles often experience a myriad of social, emotional, and psychological problems. Consequentially, they exhibit maladaptive, sometimes delinquent behaviors in various levels of severity. This combination of needs and behaviors is such that these juveniles often do not fit into one exclusive service agency category as defined by the agency's categorical funding, targeted population or area of expertise.

Juvenile offenders with mental health problems can be treated in a variety of

settings, based on the individual's need, the level of severity of the maladaptive behavior and a thorough assessment of the juvenile's risk potential. That is, they may benefit from in-home services, nonresidential community-based services, community-based group living programs, and/or more intensive residential treatment centers. In some cases, their disturbances are severe enough and their behavior dangerous enough that they require institutionalization for the safety of the public and the juveniles themselves. Given the severity of their multifaceted problems, they often require long-term treatment. Existing programs tend to be too short.

The development of a range of local, regional and statewide resources and programs for these juveniles from early identification, prevention and early intervention through aftercare is critical. Many of these juveniles need a mix of what the DHS, the mental health community and the JJC are able to provide. Joint local, regional and statewide ventures can potentially address the needs of this population.

### **The Intellectually Limited and Cognitively Impaired Juvenile Offender**

The juvenile justice system is presented with youth who are intellectually limited, with deficits ranging from mild to severe. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is charged with the responsibility of identifying and providing for developmentally disabled juveniles including those who are court involved. Historically, those juvenile offenders that have been determined to be developmentally disabled by DDD have encountered a severe shortage of available resources as intervention models tailored for adolescent offenders have been slow to develop. This presents a dilemma for the court when faced with the responsibility of framing a disposition for the developmentally disabled or intellectually limited juvenile offender that will protect the public from further victimization by the juvenile, hold the juvenile accountable, and simultaneously provide a meaningful

rehabilitative opportunity for the juvenile.

### **Juvenile Sex Offenders**

There are insufficient residential and out-patient programs, services and dispositional options for juvenile sex offenders. This population often presents a multitude of needs and issues that require resolution to achieve successful rehabilitation and reduce the public safety risk of recidivating. These needs are complex and include addressing not only the offending behavior, but frequently the juvenile perpetrator's own sexual victimization.

The JJC's Pinelands Residential Group Center is the only juvenile sex offender specific program of its type in the State. It has a population capacity of eighteen. The great majority of juveniles needing noninstitutional juvenile sex offender specific residential treatment are not admitted into the Pinelands program. There are a number of out-of-home placement programs funded by the Department of Human Services that work with low risk juvenile sex offenders, such as Ranch Hope, the Drenk Mental Health Center's Milestones Program, and the Children's Home of Burlington County. Most Department of Human Services funded programs serving this population, however, do not provide programming specific to juvenile sex offenders.

A significant number of the State's juvenile sex offenders are placed in out of state residential treatment programs. The development of local treatment programs should be a priority in responding to the needs of this special population of juvenile offenders.

### **Substance Abusing Juvenile Offenders**

There is a need for readily accessible substance abuse treatment programs throughout the State that provide services ranging from out-patient support groups to intensive long-term residential treatment, regardless of the adolescent's geographic location

or access to medical insurance. Substance abusing juvenile delinquents in county detention centers often wait for admission into treatment programs for extended periods of time. As a result of this delay, it is difficult for some to sustain their motivation to change, a key ingredient for successful rehabilitative treatment.

Relapse after successful completion of a treatment program is a common phenomenon. Many adolescent substance abusers returning home following residential treatment are returning to families where other members abuse substances. Maintaining sobriety in this environment can be particularly challenging. Greater resources are needed to prevent and respond to relapse experiences. For the adolescent substance abuser, aftercare is vital.

### **The Mentally Ill, Chemically Dependent Juvenile Offenders**

Of the substance abusing population, the hardest to place are juveniles. There have been cutbacks in programs, services and funding at a time when the need and demand are rising. Mentally ill, chemically addicted (MICA) juveniles who present a combination of mental health and substance abuse treatment needs are particularly difficult to place in appropriate services. There is a shortage of available, affordable, family oriented residential services for this population.

### **Juvenile Fire Setters**

It is extremely difficult to secure dispositional alternatives for juvenile offenders adjudicated on an offense related to fire setting or with a history of such behavior. Rehabilitative options that specialize in working with this population within the State are limited. As with other groups within the larger special needs population, these juveniles present a range of risk factors and various levels of intensity of treatment needs. Those posing the greatest risk and in need of the most intensive rehabilitation require offender



specific treatment to address the myriad of issues contributing to their fire setting behavior.

Within some counties there are nonresidential programs for the subgroup of such juveniles that has been identified as posing low levels of risk. In some cases, the DHS is able to access residential treatment services on their behalf through contracted programs. DHS is also able to access some out of state residential programs.

The potential and actual threat that this population represents to persons and property warrants attention. The juvenile justice system needs to secure evaluative information regarding these juveniles that will assess the risk level, and identify the type of treatment required.

### **Gender Specific Services for Female Delinquents**

The juvenile justice system offers a disproportionately small amount of dispositional services to adolescent female offenders. While it is true that the majority of delinquency offenses are committed by males, the share of offenses and serious offenses that are accounted for by females has increased substantially over the last ten years.

In addition to special interventions required by all adolescent offenders manifesting mental health problems, learning disabilities, cognitive impairments, and/or substance abuse behavior, the adolescent female offender presents gender specific issues requiring special attention. The adolescent female offender is more prone to depression, suicide and other mental health problems. The adolescent female offender is often a victim of sexual abuse and/or domestic violence. Promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases, abandonment, pregnancy, parenthood, and separation from her child during an out-of-home placement or incarceration are among the issues that influence the adolescent female offender's behavior. Prevention, early intervention and dispositional alternatives ranging from in-home to residential placements should be provided within a framework that recognizes the gender

specific habilitative and rehabilitative needs of the adolescent female offender.

### **Coordination and Collaboration**

As noted above, many of the juveniles in the juvenile justice system present needs that extend beyond the categorical services provided by individual government departments or systems. Collaboration in the planning and implementation of services and sanctions for multi-agency/multi-system juveniles must be established. This is particularly essential in providing for the special needs populations noted above. These juveniles typically have multifaceted needs that extend beyond the expertise, service and funding boundaries of any one system or agency.

All departments, divisions, and commissions involved with juveniles should work more collaboratively at each organizational level. Establishing enhanced relationships between the Department of Education, local educational authorities, the Family Court and its auxiliary agencies, is key to impacting on the early identification and comprehensive provision of appropriate services to, and interventions with, juveniles.

Many services and programs operate through categorical funding which requires serving only clients that present specific needs. Related interagency issues include: funding issues; sharing responsibility for juveniles presenting diverse, interagency needs; bureaucratic red tape that hampers service delivery; priority setting; sharing and increasing resources; information sharing regarding juveniles and related confidentiality issues; participating in research to identify what works; and using research findings for future system planning and development. Private industry, corporations, the faith community and the community at large need to be included in system planning and service delivery.

The JJC and each of the divisions within the DHS have expertise in working with certain juvenile populations. On many occasions the JJC and the DHS have worked

collaboratively on individual cases. An ongoing joint, collaborative planning and program development effort for special needs juvenile offenders would improve the juvenile justice system's ability to divert these populations from serious and lengthy careers as juvenile and adult offenders.

### **Aftercare**

Dispositional services, programs and incarceration provide juvenile offenders a significant amount of structure. Structured programs hold juveniles accountable for their behavior in order to maximize the opportunity for juvenile offenders to achieve change. Graduation or parole from dispositional programs implies that the juvenile has achieved some degree of success, has derived some benefit, and has adopted modified patterns of behavior, self-discipline and problem solving skills. Sustaining these positive changes in their homes and communities is a challenge, particularly for those youth who are returning to dysfunctional families and/or high crime neighborhoods. Both a successful transition back to the community from the structure of out-of-home placements and public safety are served by the provision of effective aftercare services. Ultimately, the juvenile offender needs support, supervision and direction to help reduce the risk of recidivating.

### **Research, Evaluation and Data Collection**

Historically, the juvenile justice system has not systematically examined the performance and effectiveness of programming provided to juvenile offenders. However, government is increasingly being asked to "show results" with regard to its use of taxpayer dollars. There is general agreement regarding the need to examine and better determine "what works" with regard to juvenile justice system programs. Greater knowledge is required regarding programs' effectiveness and efficient use of scarce juvenile justice resources. Such research and evaluation is needed to facilitate decisions regarding

budgetary allocations and authorizations for the development, replication and implementation of promising and effective programs and interventions.

## **MISSION AND MANDATE OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION**

This Part II of the Plan discusses the Juvenile Justice Commission's structure and its efforts in furtherance of the goals of juvenile justice reform as detailed by the Governor's Advisory Council and the Commission's enabling legislation. This Part also informs as to issues confronting the Commission's continued efforts at effectuating juvenile justice reform.

The Juvenile Justice Commission's responsibilities extend to a broad spectrum of sanctions and services throughout the juvenile justice system. Primarily and foremost, while ensuring the safety of the public, the Commission is responsible for the custody and care of juveniles committed by the court and those juveniles on probation status, with a court ordered condition of participation in a Commission noninstitutional program. The Commission's mandate requires the provision of education services to the juveniles under its care, and the responsibility for aftercare/parole supervision of committed juveniles released from the Commission's custody.

The Commission's responsibilities are not limited to the administration of state correctional operations. Indeed, the Commission is charged with a significant oversight role in county juvenile justice issues. The Commission maintains the responsibility to establish standards for county detention facilities and to monitor compliance with those standards. The Commission also oversees the implementation of education programs in the county detention facilities.

The Commission's charge further includes the coordination with counties, through the County Youth Services Commissions, in the planning, development and implementation of delinquency prevention programs, and services and sanctions for delinquent juveniles. The Commission administers the State/Community Partnership Grant Program which

provides financial assistance to counties for local programming necessary to respond to local juvenile justice issues. Local financial assistance is also available through grant funding through the Commission's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee.

## **ENTERING THE JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION**

### **Juvenile Justice Commission Court Liaisons**

JJC court liaisons assigned to every county, are involved in the court process. Typically, court liaisons are the first Commission staff that juveniles encounter. The liaisons perform multiple functions in the system. Where County Youth Services Commissions have established Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs), they attend MDT meetings to assist in developing and, when appropriate, providing alternatives to secure detention. The JJC court liaisons explore service and program resources for the court's consideration at the time of disposition. They consult with other agency staff and clinicians to assess juveniles' risk of reoffending and rehabilitative needs with the goal of identifying JJC and non-JJC dispositional alternative resource options. They interview juveniles who have been identified as having substance abuse problems, utilizing a modified risk assessment tool to determine the seriousness of the abuse for possible referral for substance abuse services. Post-adjudication, they identify and refer when appropriate, juveniles who may be at risk of commitment and who, as an alternative, may benefit from placement in a JJC noninstitutional program.

### **Classification**

Following the commitment of a juvenile by the court, the process of classifying the juvenile begins. Classification within juvenile justice is the process of assigning offenders to

custody levels and treatment programs based on assessments of the offenders' supervision requirements and service needs. For the Commission, this means first determining whether juveniles are appropriate for institutional or structured noninstitutional placement.

**Mobile Classification.** Prior to the establishment of the Commission, the classification of offenders often took lengthy periods of time, as all committed juveniles were classified at a single location at the New Jersey Training School for Boys (NJTSB or Training School). This resulted in backlogs of juveniles held post-commitment in county detention centers, awaiting placement. With the creation of the JJC, the classification process was expanded to include a Mobile Classification Unit, consisting of three regional teams, designed to expedite the classification process and the movement of juveniles out of detention centers and into JJC intake units.

The Mobile Classification team begins the classification process by visiting the county detention centers within a designated region in order to review court, detention, and prior placement documents and histories, and to interview juveniles upon their commitment. Through this process the team identifies specific sanctions and services that have been utilized for the youth, as well as ongoing or new service needs, and makes a recommendation regarding an appropriate placement for the juvenile. Using this information, the team completes a unified intake assessment packet, which includes the recommendation for either institutional care or structured noninstitutional program placement, and submits it to the JJC's Centralized Intake and Classification Office.

**Centralized Intake.** Once a transfer is authorized, each youth is transported to one of three intake housing units. Valentine Hall is the reception unit for females. Housing Unit 2 at the NJTSB is the intake unit for juveniles preliminarily recommended by Mobile Classification as suitable for noninstitutional assignment. NJTSB's Juvenile Reception Unit

is the intake unit for those juveniles preliminarily recommended for institutional assignment. A Classification Committee has been established for each intake unit. At the intake units the classification process continues as social work staff interact with the juvenile, and review all available information regarding the juveniles in their unit. During this time, medical and psychological evaluations are usually completed. Juveniles spend approximately one to three weeks in the intake housing unit prior to being seen by the unit's Classification Committee.

Following the review of the juvenile's file, input from housing unit supervisors, and an interview with the juvenile, the Classification Committee makes a placement determination. In reaching its decision, the Committee considers a variety of factors, including security concerns, the current offense, offense history, program and escape history, service needs, institutional adjustment, and medical, psychological, and educational testing.

The classification process also includes specialized committees that address specific categories of juvenile offenders. The Special Case Review Committee reviews all cases identified as having specific needs that require additional attention (e.g., DYFS, DDD, homelessness). The Institutional Classification Committee reviews cases involving State Parole Board recommendations, housing unit changes, vocational or educational assignments, and warnings and reprimands. The SRP Orientation Unit Committee reviews all SRP recruits prior to transfer from the Orientation Unit to the boot camp site. And finally, the Sex Offender/Special Needs Assessment Panel reviews and develops treatment plans for all juveniles with committing, prior, or pending sex offenses.



## **JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION POPULATION AND RELATED DATA**

In 1998, there were 1,447 commitments to the Juvenile Justice Commission.<sup>3</sup> This figure was virtually unchanged from the prior year's figure (1,451). Over a five year period (1994 through 1998) commitments increased 7.5% (see Table 6); in 1994 there were 1,346 commitments (to the Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Services). Over this five year period, commitments rose to 1,562 in 1996 prior to declining the following year.

A small number of primarily urban counties continued to account for a large share of statewide juvenile commitments. Three counties, Camden (297), Essex (199) and Passaic (197) accounted for nearly half (47.9%) of all commitments in 1998. An additional two counties, Hudson (151) and Atlantic (102), combine with the above three counties to account for nearly two-thirds (65.4%) of all commitments. In contrast, seven other counties accounted for only 4.2% of all juvenile commitments: Hunterdon (4), Morris (4), Cape May (5), Warren (5), Sussex (7), Salem (16) and Somerset (20).

### **Demographics of Youth Committed to the JJC**

The following provides a demographic profile of juveniles committed to the JJC in 1998:

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<sup>3</sup> The commitment figure includes all commitments for State incarceration made by judges, logged in by JJC Centralized Intake during 1998. In addition, the figure includes parole violators logged in by JJC Centralized Intake during the year. The actual number of youth who were admitted to the JJC in 1998 was 1,396. Youth who are logged in while in a county detention center, for example, may max out or be recalled by a judge prior to being admitted to the JJC, thus, reducing the actual number of committed juveniles admitted to the JJC.

**Age.** A majority of committed youth were either 17 (27.9%) or 18 years (27.9%) of age, a combined 55.9% of the total. The remaining age categories accounted for the following: 16 (17.6%); 19 and above (14.6%); 15 (8.4%); and, accounting for the smallest portion,



14 and below, 3.6%.

**Gender.** The vast majority of youth committed in 1998 were male. Males accounted for a total of 96.0%, and females, 4.0% of all committed youth.

**Race/Ethnicity.** Minority youth comprised 88.0% of all committed youth in 1998. The breakdown was as follows: African American (66.2%), Hispanic (21.3%), White (12.0%), and Other (0.5%).

### **Types of Committing Offenses**

Youth are committed to the JJC on a wide variety of adjudicated charges. The following is a breakdown of the most serious offense leading to commitment for youth admitted to the JJC in 1998.<sup>4</sup> The largest share (21.6%) of youth were committed on a violation of probation (with no more serious charge). Third degree drug offenses accounted for the next highest share (17.8%) of commitments. Additional offenses included: Theft, third degree (5.9%); Assault, second degree (5.0%); Burglary, third degree (5.0%); Robbery, first degree (4.8%); Robbery, second degree (4.5%); Theft, fourth degree (4.0%); Burglary, second degree (3.1%); and Weapons offenses, third degree (2.9%). Taken together, the above offenses and violations of probation accounted for three-quarters (74.6%) of the commitments.

Offenses leading to commitment vary by degree of seriousness. The most common degree type was third degree offenses, accounting for 37.5% of the commitments. These

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<sup>4</sup> These data are based on two fairly comprehensive samples of committed juveniles admitted to the JJC between February and May, 1998, and during October and November, 1998. The combined sample consists of 421 juveniles; it does not include youth returned on parole violations.

were followed by: violations of probation (no degree), 21.6%; second degree offenses, 16.4%; fourth degree offenses, 12.6%; first degree offenses, 7.6%; and disorderly persons offenses, 4.3%.

### **Average Daily Populations**

On any given day in 1998, the Juvenile Justice Commission supervised and cared for 1,382 youth in its institutions and programs (excluding Aftercare/Parole).<sup>5</sup> This included an average daily population of 661 in its three institutions, New Jersey Training School for Boys; Juvenile Medium Security Facility (JMSF); and Valentine Hall (for females), 547 in its 21 noninstitutional residential programs, a combined 83 youth in its Stabilization &

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<sup>5</sup> This figure also does not include a small number of programs providing support services to the JJC. There was an average of 12 youth in these programs in 1998.

Reintegration Program (juvenile boot camp) and related Orientation Unit, and 91 youth in its day programs.

While placement in the institutions and the Stabilization & Reintegration Program (SRP) is limited to committed youth, the JJC's noninstitutional residential programs admit both committed youth and probationers. The term probationers refers to youth ordered into JJC residential programs as part of an overall judicial disposition which includes a term of probation supervision. Day programs are limited to admitting probationers. However, committed youth may be placed in a JJC day program as a transition back to the community after serving a term in custody. In 1998, there were on average, 325 probationers in noninstitutional residential programs, comprising 58% of the average daily population of those programs.

The total average daily population figure noted above (1,382) reflects an increase of 3.5% in JJC population in these institutions and programs in 1998 compared with the figure for 1997 (1,333). Between 1997 and 1998, average daily population for youth in custodial settings (i.e., excluding day programs) rose 9.0%, including, a 7.5% increase at institutions; a 9.2% increase at Wharton Tract/Orientation; and an 11.0% increase at noninstitutional residential programs.

### **Juvenile Justice Commission Bed Need?**

The JJC since its inception has experienced a shortage of both institutional and noninstitutional beds. In an effort to better understand and seek to address the extent of actual bed shortages at any particular time, a bed need figure has been calculated. The figure combines: a) average population in custodial settings; and b) the number of youth awaiting placement in JJC institutions/programs (not including day programs). On any one day, there are youth who have either been committed to the JJC or ordered into JJC

noninstitutional residential programs as probationers, and await admission to the Commission. For the most part, these youth are incarcerated in county detention centers or jails awaiting placement; a small portion remain home while they wait.

A comparison of total bed need with JJC bed capacity provides a clear picture of the current shortage of beds. In 1998, the JJC had an average bed need of 1,402. This figure included an average of 111 committed juveniles and probationers awaiting admission. However, the JJC's total bed capacity was 1,156. The result translates to a shortage of 246 beds, on average, in 1998, which includes an estimated shortage of 134 institutional beds and 112 noninstitutional beds.

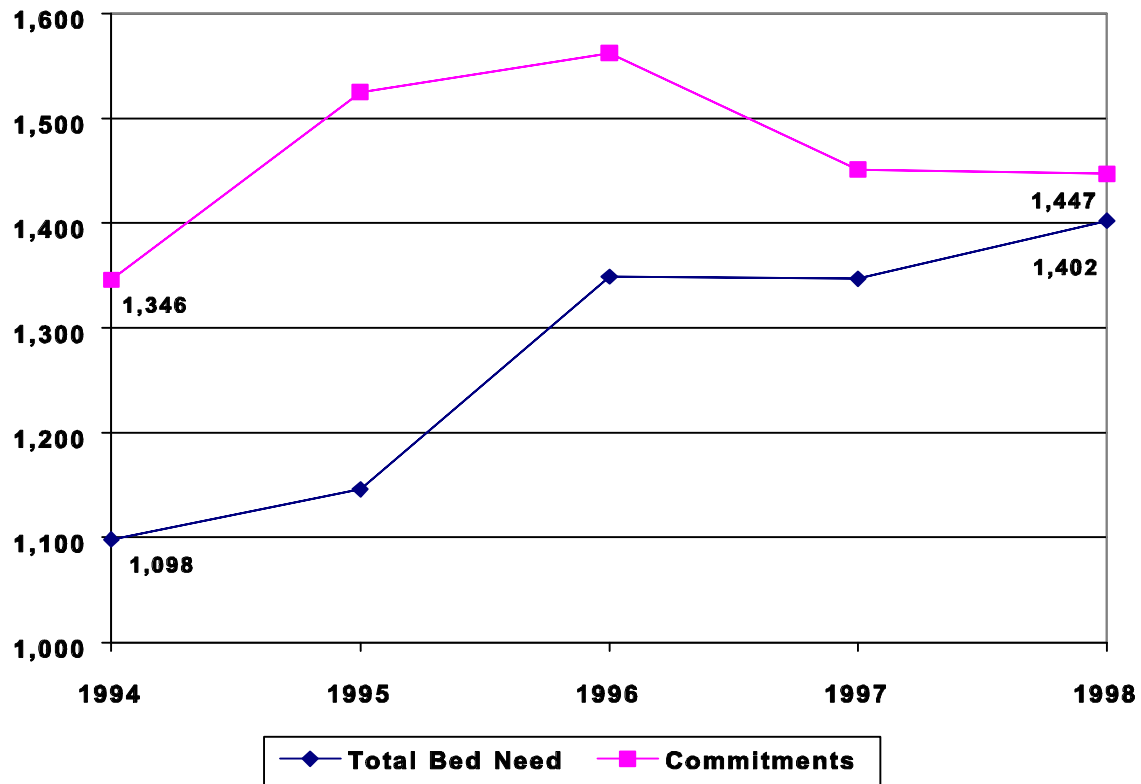
There has been an increase in JJC total bed need over time. Total bed need for 1998 (1,402) rose 4.1% compared with 1997. Over a five year period (1994 through 1998) bed need increased 27.7% from 1,098 to 1,402. However, the rate of increase has slowed since 1996. Note that the level and change in level of JJC bed need are related to the number of commitments to the Commission each year. Even so, the two figures diverge somewhat with bed need growing more rapidly than commitments between 1994 and 1997 (see Chart 6). This can be explained, in part, by: a) a growth in the number of probationers placed in JJC noninstitutional residential programs; b) recent increases in the length of stay of committed juveniles in Commission institutions and programs; and c) increases in parole violations related to closer surveillance by the new JJC Aftercare/Parole function as the Commission has increasingly taken over the function from the Department of Corrections.

The JJC has utilized recent bed need figures (typically two year periods) in an attempt to approximate projected future bed needs. For the most recent two year period, 1996 to 1998, total bed need rose by 53, from 1,349 to 1,402; the entire growth occurred

over the last year, as indicated

above. The approximated projection,

### JJC Commitments and Bed Need, 1994-1998



therefore, is for an annual growth of 27 in the JJC's need for beds. This translates into a projected annual growth of 16 institutional beds and 11 noninstitutional beds; the breakdown is based on recent findings of a Commission project examining initial classification decisions regarding its committed youth.



Actual growth in JJC population, in fact, may be higher in light of statutorily mandated changes relevant to the JJC (e.g., increased parole violations related to the JJC's assumption of full responsibility for the parole function from the Department of Corrections; and expected increases in parole violations related to full implementation of the statutory requirement for committed youth to serve an additional community supervision term of one-third the length of their sentence). These trends exist alongside potentially contrary trends (e.g., declining juvenile arrest rates) that suggest lesser rates of growth.

## **THE JUVENILE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Since its creation, the JJC has utilized a management information system provided by the Department of Corrections. Interim measures have been undertaken by JJC Management Information System (MIS) staff to provide a centralized database and to meet

critical organizational needs.

The JJC has now undertaken development of a comprehensive Juvenile Information Management System (JIMS). The system will serve to significantly enhance operational, research and policy, and overall organizational efforts and activities. The new system will include all relevant processes and functions throughout the period for which the JJC has jurisdiction over juvenile offenders, i.e., from initial intake, through classification, movement within and among facility settings, education, release, and aftercare/parole. Thus the new system will facilitate effective tracking of, and security regarding, juvenile offenders as they move from entry to exit from JJC involvement.

The JIMS will be developed using the client/server approach. All data about juveniles and facilities will reside in a centralized database server at the Commission's central office, and be accessible by authorized users throughout the State. Full implementation of JIMS is scheduled for November 1999.

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION UNIT DESCRIPTIONS**

### **Juvenile Justice Commission Institutions**

#### **The New Jersey Training School for Boys**

The New Jersey Training School for Boys located in Monroe Township provides custody, care, and treatment for committed male juvenile offenders 12 to 18 years old. As discussed supra at 56, it is the reception site for male juvenile offenders. Its two intake units conduct assessments and make initial preparations for classification to either secure care institutions or noninstitutional programs within the JJC. NJTSB includes various housing units, a Behavior Modification Unit (BMU) and a Guidance Unit (GU).

Youth are provided opportunities to participate in a number of vocational education

and training programs; two are mentioned here. Juveniles involved in *Welding Training* are responsible for meeting all of the NJTSB's welding needs. Juveniles assigned to the *Optical Lab* at NJTSB are taught how to make prescription eyeglasses. The juveniles in this lab produce prescriptive eyewear for all juveniles in JJC custody. They produce all prescriptive eyewear for inmates of the Department of Corrections, including those housed in ten county jails. When employees of the Department of Environmental Protection wear prescription glasses and need to wear hazardous waste handling head gear during the performance of their duties, the juveniles of the NJTSB Optical Lab produce special prescription eyeglasses that will fit under the head gear. By working in this lab, the juveniles learn entry level marketable skills in this profession. Staff has been able to help these juveniles secure employment in optical labs and physicians' offices upon release from NJTSB.

NJTSB staff involved with *Project OPTION* select juveniles from the population and work with them to develop leadership skills. These juveniles become peer leaders. Those that excel in this training are then called upon to conduct tours of the facility for visitors and share with those visitors insights and information regarding how and why juveniles are committed to NJTSB and what it is like to be incarcerated. Visiting participants in Project OPTION include community groups and students from public schools.

The Video Program at NJTSB involves the juveniles in producing videos. Staff members from the program produce tapes of the JJC's various units. The juveniles then edit, add background music, graphics, etc., to the film to produce a finished product. This service is also provided to the Department of Corrections and other State agencies.

### **Specialized Institutional Programs**

The Alpha Meta Program is a substance abuse treatment program located at NJTSB. NJTSB also operates Internship and Volunteer programs for screened and approved college

students and community volunteers.

**The Johnstone Campus: Juvenile Medium Security Facility and Juvenile Female Secure Care and Intake Facility (Valentine Hall)**

JMSF and Valentine Hall, located in Bordentown are the most secure institutions for committed male and female juvenile offenders. JMSF houses a maximum of 127 committed males 14 to 20 years old who are assigned through initial classification or subsequently due to poor adjustment in JJC noninstitutional programs or at NJTSB.

The juveniles assigned to JMSF have opportunities to benefit in numerous vocational opportunities designed to help them develop marketable skills. In the *Wood Shop*, the juveniles build a wide variety of furniture. This furniture is purchased by staff, the juveniles' family members and the general public. In the *Silk Screen Shop*, the juveniles make tee shirts, hats, etc., for other JJC units as well as through contract to community organizations. JMSF hopes to open an *upholstery shop* in the near future. Through a grant, the Genesis Program located in Camden works with JMSF juveniles from that city. In this program, Genesis staff help juveniles develop their entrepreneurial skills and secure employment when they return to their home community.

JMSF has recently secured a grant to enhance the parenting skills of its juveniles. The juveniles receive instruction from staff regarding the responsibilities and skills involved in parenthood. During visiting hours, staff is available to help the juveniles read to their children.

The juveniles assigned to JMSF have an opportunity to participate in a Student Government organization. A representative is elected from each living unit to represent the wing. Officers are elected. The Student Government meets bi-weekly to discuss and resolve issues regarding their residency in JMSF. Information regarding the general population is

distributed by staff through this body. The Student Government has had opportunities to contribute input into the development of some internal policies. For example, the group participated in the development of the *Good Grooming* policy for the juveniles in JMSF.

JMSF also hosts an expansive varsity sports program. Juveniles assigned to JJC noninstitutional programs as well as the varsity sports teams from several public high schools participate in basketball, weight lifting, volleyball, flag football and softball competitions.

Prior to mid-1997 female offenders committed to the Commission were housed in a secure wing of JMSF. Valentine Hall was opened for this population in May 1997. Valentine Hall has a capacity for 35 committed female juvenile offenders between 12 and 18 years old. As the reception site for young women, it conducts assessments and classification to determine institutional or noninstitutional assignment. Valentine Hall offers secure gender specific programming that addresses issues unique to the juvenile female offender.

Valentine Hall offers to its female offenders a variety of gender specific interventions including a number of interactive groups. These groups address topics such as wellness, parenting responsibilities, surviving sexual abuse victimization and women's studies.

Each of the three institutions provides to its juvenile offenders educational instruction in the New Jersey Core Curriculum content areas as defined and required by the Department of Education. Child Study Team services are available for special education purposes. Vocational education and programs are available to help the juveniles develop marketable skills. Clinical services are provided by JJC social services staff. Psychiatric and psychological services are available through contract. Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous groups meet at each of the institutions.

### **Stabilization and Reintegration Program (SRP)**

The Stabilization and Reintegration Program (SRP) located in Tabernacle is designed for nonviolent male juvenile offenders between 14 and 18 years old. The program consists of three phases: the orientation phase which extends up to 30 days; the five month boot camp phase; and the aftercare/parole phase (determined by length of sentence and post-incarceration supervision term).

The Orientation Unit located in Farmingdale, transitions recruits through basic drill instruction, introduction to military courtesy, and an extensive program overview. Recruits are involved in educational and vocational testing and instruction. Child Study Team services are available for special education needs.

The Wharton Tract program attempts to achieve broad rehabilitative gains for its cadets within a highly structured context of military-like discipline and regimentation. Components include the overarching regimentation and discipline, involving military bearing, drill and ceremony and rigorous physical training, and work including community service. The program also includes academic and vocational education, and social service treatment programming, including cognitive skills training and substance abuse education.

Juveniles assigned to the SRP at Wharton Tract are involved in numerous community service activities and projects. In Delanco Park, Wharton State Forest, the juveniles rehabilitate park buildings, clear paths, cut trees and prepare the park for summer campers. They have rehabilitated a historical building for the Tabernacle Historical Society. Senior citizens may (and do) call and write for assistance from the cadets. Cadets assist the seniors by completing landscaping tasks on their property, and minor home repairs such as fixing steps, etc. The juveniles have been involved in cleaning Atsion Lake in Burlington County. They care for park grounds in Batso Village. They are assisting the Pemberton Rotary Club in building a hiking and biking path to Atlantic City, and have worked in a wildlife refuge.

They will be working with a hospital art organization based in Atlanta, Georgia. Staff from his project will visit SRP and assist the cadets in completing art work for local hospitals, such as drawings to be hung on the ceilings above bedridden patients.

Aftercare includes individual case planning and service advocacy, and involves intensive post-release supervision. After the cadet has been at the facility for approximately two months, the community re-entry process begins with an aftercare conference including the cadet, a drill instructor, teacher, social worker, and aftercare/parole case manager. This conference may include family members and results in an aftercare plan for release.

The Commission undertook and continues an in-depth evaluation of the program<sup>3</sup> implementation and performance. A report was submitted to the Governor and Legislature in June 1998. The report noted clear evidence of program improvement over time. Also, findings regarding program impact, although preliminary, were encouraging, showing positive impacts regarding overcrowding, costs, reduced recidivism and the personal growth of cadets. Expansion of SRP is under consideration, awaiting additional evidence supporting this promising program.

### **JJC Noninstitutional Programs**

The Commission administers 21 noninstitutional residential and day programs<sup>6</sup> and one county detention center through contract. Noninstitutional residential programs house male or female committed and probationary juveniles typically between 14 and 18 years of age. Day programs serve probationers. Generally, the operational structure of these noninstitutional residential and day programs is similar and consists of primary components

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<sup>6</sup>JJC<sup>3</sup> residential noninstitutional programs are: Albert Elias, Camden Community Service Center, Campus Program, Florence Crittenton, Fresh Start, Manorwoods, Edison Prep, Essex, Green, Ocean, Pinelands, Southern, St. Joe<sup>3</sup>, Voorhees and Warren Residential Group Centers. JJC<sup>3</sup> noninstitutional day programs are Burlington Day, Cumberland Day, Elizabeth Day, Hudson/Liberty Park Day, Monmouth Day and Preakness Academy.

supplemented by adjunct program specific services. A number of programs provide specialized services which are described below.

### **Primary Services**

- ?? **Group Counseling** is the primary intervention strategy utilized in the JJC's noninstitutional programs. The goal of this intervention is to hold juveniles accountable for their offending behavior and modification of it. Through the group process, the juvenile is helped to understand responsibility for his or her behavior and its consequences, and must take ownership for the same. Group members are responsible for bringing to the attention of each member, his or her inappropriate behaviors or negative attitudes. Together group members, under the guidance of staff, help the juvenile develop strategies for adopting more appropriate behaviors and attitudes. Prosocial skill development including problem solving, decision making, self-discipline, self-control skills and goal directed behavior is emphasized. Group interventions are supplemented when feasible with **Individual Counseling**. These modifications in behaviors, attitudes, skills and an improved understanding of the causal relationship between actions and consequences help improve the juvenile's decision making.
- ?? **Educational Programming** is provided according to either an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) or an IPP (Individualized Program Plan) designed to meet specific needs or deficiencies. Each program schedules a minimum of four hours of daily academic instruction. All programs have computer assisted instruction with specialized software which supports the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.
- ?? **Vocational and Pre-Vocational Training** combines classroom and hands-on activities to provide juveniles with marketable skills to increase their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Pre-vocational classes include practical applications for work readiness.
- ?? **Physical Education** engages the juvenile in physical fitness activities, team sports, recreational pursuits and constructive leisure time activities.
- ?? **Family Life Health Education** provides juveniles with materials and concepts related to sex education and various other familial topics.
- ?? **Drug and Alcohol** issues are addressed in group or individual sessions and in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings with volunteers to provide support services to the juveniles.
- ?? **Restorative Justice and Community Service** projects are undertaken in local communities. These projects seek to improve communities and give juveniles an opportunity to give back to and develop empathy for those who have been victimized.
- ?? **Post-Release Planning** is completed for both committed juveniles and probationers



within noninstitutional programs. Planning provides structure and support for the successful reintegration of juveniles back into their families and communities.

### **Specialized Programming**

**The Atlantic Youth Center - Harborfields** is a secure detention center operated by the Juvenile Justice Commission under contract with Atlantic County.

**Campus Program** is a noninstitutional substance abuse treatment program serving 36 male offenders ages 16 to 18.

**Pinelands Residential Group Center** provides noninstitutional intensive residential treatment for 18 male sex offenders, ages 14 to 17. Juveniles enter the program on a three year term of probation. The average length of stay is 18 months. Participation in offender specific post-release treatment and supervision for the balance of the probationary term is court ordered prior to admission into the program.

**Florence Crittenton Residential Group Center** is the JJC's only noninstitutional residential program for females. It provides gender specific services for 18 committed offenders and probationers.

**Fresh Start Residential Group Center** is located on the grounds of the Arthur Brisbane Child Treatment Center. This eight bed program is the Commission's only noninstitutional unit for juveniles with mental health problems, intellectual limitations and special vulnerabilities due to cognitive impairments.

**Central Prep** is a JJC regional school that serves juveniles from Albert Elias, Florence Crittenton, and St. Joe's Residential Group Centers.

**Edison Prep Residential Group Center** is a contracted program for 55 male juveniles, located at the Edison Job Corps Center in Middlesex County. Upon completion of the program, the juveniles have the option to enroll in Job Corps on a full time basis.

**Junior Mentor AmeriCorp Program** is the only program of its kind in the United States. The goal of the Commission's AmeriCorp Program is to select JJC noninstitutional program graduates who demonstrated above average accomplishments and leadership skills. Using peer leadership and by demonstrating the steps necessary to make changes in their lives, AmeriCorp participants function as Juvenile Mentors to assist juvenile offenders in JJC noninstitutional programs in making positive adjustments. The Junior Mentors provide leadership in arranging and implementing community service projects for other community organizations. Junior Mentors are expected to complete 1,700 hours of service annually. During 1998, there were eight successful graduates from the AmeriCorp Program. Currently, 20 Junior Mentors are enrolled throughout the various JJC noninstitutional programs. Commission staff report that this program appears to be a life changing experience for the participating Junior Mentors.

#### **Department of Health and Senior Services Substance Abuse Treatment Beds**

Through a memorandum of agreement with the Commission, the Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Addiction Services, provides 75 noninstitutional substance abuse treatment beds in seven programs<sup>7</sup> to JJC juveniles. Most of the programs use a therapeutic community treatment modality. These contracted programs admit committed juveniles and probationers into their programs. The length of residency at these programs is determined by the length of the term of commitment and/or the rehabilitation needs of the juvenile. The Classification Committee processes and approves the assignment of committed juveniles to these programs. The Office of the JJC Substance Abuse

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<sup>7</sup>DHSS programs providing noninstitutional residential substance abuse treatment to JJC juveniles are: Integrity Bates, Newark; Integrity Bates, Secaucus; New Hope, Marlboro; New Hope Secaucus; Touchtone Hall; Renaissance, Newark and; Straight and Narrow.

Administrator processes the admission of all probationers into the programs. With the beds in these programs, the JJC provides or has access to 163 institutional and noninstitutional substance abuse treatment beds.

Additionally, the JJC is currently contracting with the Renaissance Program in Newark to provide ten residential relapse intervention slots to juvenile parolees.

## **SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

Very frequently, juveniles entering the JJC have multiple needs related to family, school, peers, and other problems including limited cognitive skills and/or limited prosocial attitudes. A portion of these JJC juveniles are characterized by fairly severe cognitive or emotional difficulties, e.g., mental health problems, learning disabilities, intellectual limitations. Mobile classification staff estimate that a significant majority of juveniles interviewed need attention regarding mental health issues ranging in degree of severity.

As in the larger juvenile justice system, the special needs population within the JJC includes juveniles with mental health problems, learning disabilities, intellectual limitations and special vulnerability issues. Some of these juveniles exhibit fire setting, sexually abusive or substance abusing behaviors. Resources are lacking for the female offender exhibiting one or more of the special needs identified above. Like their counterparts in the larger system, these male and female offenders require interventions beyond those traditionally provided in juvenile correctional settings to protect the public and maximize rehabilitative efforts.

Educational and diagnostic evaluations often do not accompany the juvenile offender at the time of admission to the JJC. The Commission needs to comprehensively assess the juvenile's level of risk and needs to facilitate the development of an appropriate intervention

plan. Failure to gain an understanding of a juvenile inmate's special needs can result in the juvenile's inappropriate assignment, which increases risk and hampers rehabilitative efforts.

The special population juveniles in the JJC present psychological, emotional, social, intellectual, and learning problems, limitations and disabilities. In some cases, the special needs juvenile who enters the JJC has exhausted existing alternative resources, in part because appropriate diversionary resources did not exist or could not be accessed quickly enough. Secondly, the special needs juvenile entering JJC often presents a *combination* of special needs that extend beyond the abilities of other State, county or local agencies.

While the Commission may be in a better position than other agencies within the system to provide the sanctions and control required by these populations, it lacks the clinical expertise and resources to comprehensively identify, assess and address the special rehabilitative needs. Correctional interventions provided to this population must include both sanctions and rehabilitative interventions that can be understood by the juvenile.

These special populations typically present special vulnerabilities within the correctional environment. It is not unusual for these juveniles to be victimized by other inmates or to engage in self-destructive behavior, including self-mutilation and suicidal gestures. They often require an inordinate amount of the custodial staff's time and attention. Also, the custodial staff traditionally do not receive sufficient training in effective methods of working with special populations. As a result of attempts to control the acting out behavior of these special populations and to protect them from themselves and others, they are often moved into the most restrictive settings due to a lack of alternatives. Once in these settings, access to services (e.g., special education, clinical staff) is even more restricted than within the general population. The juveniles with the most severe special needs gravitate toward the deepest end of the system where services are least available.

The Commission's existing noninstitutional programs also experience difficulty working with the special needs juveniles. This is so in part because of a lack of individually focused or specialized resources. An increasing number of juveniles in noninstitutional programs take psychotropic medication. Youth within the specialized populations are often excluded from noninstitutional programs and substance abuse beds. This exclusion is due to issues including their social, emotional and management needs, (suicidality, medication), or their inability to deal with a peer group intervention modality (intellectual limitation, hyperactivity/attentional deficits, learning disabilities).

The JJC noninstitutional specialized bed capacity for special populations has decreased over the years. Currently, there is one eight bed noninstitutional program. The demand far exceeds this capacity. This resource limitation has resulted in many of these juveniles remaining in institutional settings unnecessarily.

Some of the juvenile offenders with mental health problems require an institutional setting. A portion of the special needs juveniles currently in secure institutional settings may receive some individual and/or group counseling, but their presence among the general population hinders their individual progress and acts as an obstacle within a general housing unit.

The following snapshot statistics provide an indication of the presence of special populations juveniles in the JJC.

- ?? During 1998, 21% of the juveniles at NJTSB who had a known diagnosis and had received psychological counseling, were diagnosed with a Conduct Disorder.
- ?? In 1996, the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, (the Center), estimated that nationally, 6 of every 100 (6%) youth may be experiencing major depression. A 1998 survey of the population at NJTSB revealed that 8% were diagnosed with major depression.

- ?? The Center estimated that nationally, schizophrenia occurs in about 3 out of every 1,000 adolescents. During 1998, there were six juveniles in NJTSB (of 500) who were diagnosed schizophrenic or psychotic. This is four times the national estimate cited by the Center.
- ?? During 1998, 14.5% of NJTSB population were receiving psychotropic medication.
- ?? In the fall of 1998, 40% of the juveniles in JJC noninstitutional programs were classified special education students. Sixteen percent were classified by a Child Study Team as Learning Disabled (Neurologically Impaired, Perceptually Impaired).
- ?? In the fall of 1998, 41% of the juveniles assigned to the Stabilization and Reintegration Program (SRP) were classified special education students. Ten percent of that group were classified as Learning Disabled.
- ?? Commission staff estimate that as many as 10 to 15% of the juveniles entering the JJC score below 70 on tests of intellectual ability.

### **Substance Abusers**

The POSIT (Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers) is a screening tool that highlights risk factors in the following areas: substance use and abuse; physical health status; mental health status; family relationships; peer relations; educational status; vocational status; social skills; leisure and recreation and; aggressive behavior or delinquency. The JJC uses the POSIT as its initial strategy in identifying those juveniles with substance abuse problems. Mobile Classification teams administer the POSIT to all committed juveniles. The results are used by the Classification Committee when making housing assignments.

An abridged version of the POSIT is administered to probationary candidates for a JJC noninstitutional program. Probationers identified as needing residential substance abuse treatment are referred to the Office of the Substance Abuse Administrator for placement in a Department of Health and Senior Services substance abuse program.

POSIT is a screening tool only. The Commission has begun efforts to develop a more

comprehensive assessment tool that will assist in the identification of juveniles who are addicts, abusers or in need of substance use education and awareness only.

The Mobile Classification teams reveal that as many as 68% of all juveniles committed to the JJC indicate some degree of substance use experience. It is estimated that one-third of the committed juveniles who report some substance involvement may be in need of residential substance abuse treatment. There are currently 163 substance abuse beds (plus 10 relapse beds) available to the JJC. This is significantly below the estimated need. Until a more comprehensive assessment process is developed and implemented, it remains difficult to determine the specifics of the types of rehabilitative services that this population requires.

Mobile Classification staff report interviewing increasing numbers of juvenile sex offenders with substance abuse treatment needs and MICA juveniles who have been in detention waiting admission into JJC. Currently, there are limited resources in JJC to provide for MICA male offenders. There are no resources in JJC for the committed MICA female offenders.

Like their non-JJC counterparts in the larger system, substance abusing juveniles within the Commission need aftercare services that will sustain their sobriety after their release. They also need access to relapse intervention programs and beds.

### **Gender Specific Services for Females**

The Commission operates one institutional facility (Valentine Hall) and one noninstitutional program (Florence Crittenton Residential Group Center) for female offenders. The programming at both sites has been developed to address gender specific issues. However, neither site has the resources to respond to issues of substance abuse and/or mental health. Currently, there are no specialized drug treatment, mental health or MICA beds available for female offenders. The creation of a noninstitutional unit for female

offender substance abusers, enhancement of clinical services at Florence Crittenton and a contract for MICA female offenders would substantially enhance the Commission's response to this population.

## **OFFICE OF EDUCATION**

The educational mission of the Commission is to provide appropriate educational program options and opportunities that meet individual needs and focus on transitional services for successfully integrating juveniles into community schools and/or alternative placements upon release. Student literacy is the foundation of all educational programming which is guided by courses of study tied to the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Child Study Team evaluations and services, along with special education services are available as needed to juveniles. Ungraded educational and treatment programs are designed to address both the cognitive and affective needs of each individual juvenile.

Educational programming is provided twelve months a year and consists of a minimum of 220 days of available education services. Both full and part-time learning opportunities are offered year round, as well as evening and Saturday programs.

Students receive instruction in academics and basic life skills including reading, language arts, mathematics, family life education, AIDS prevention, health/safety, physical education, and creative arts. In addition, students have opportunities to participate in career exploration and work experiences.

Secondary course proficiency programs are delivered to those students seeking a high school diploma from their public school district, or through a state-endorsed high school diploma. Students who do not choose the traditional diploma route are provided classes designed for the attainment of a GED.



Pre-vocational and vocational programs that stress job readiness skills and appropriate work place attitudes are offered at all facilities, either by Commission staff or through contracts with local colleges, vocational school, businesses and community agencies. This training combines classroom and hands on instruction with the goal of providing the juveniles with marketable skills thereby increasing their ability to achieve economic self-sufficiency. The juveniles are taught to complete an application, write a resume and cover letter, prepare for an interview, budget a pay check, plan for savings and living expenses and to determine what a salary will be. Vocational activities give students work force exposure, career exploration and employability skills, including courtesy, punctuality, and dependability.

The Commission offers a variety of vocational training opportunities in areas that include: upholstery, horticulture, welding, optical lab, graphic arts, auto body, auto mechanics, electrical and building trades, machine shop, small engine repair, radio and TV communications, drafting, cabinet making, computer lab and graphic arts, business, computer technology and cosmetology.

A *Moving Toward Wellness* curriculum has been developed. It incorporates the four major areas mandated by the Department of Education in its Chemical Health Education Guide. These areas are: substance use and abuse information, self-awareness, interpersonal skills and decision making. The twelve interactive lessons afford the juvenile the opportunity to engage in activities that involve awareness, action, acquiring knowledge and application. This methodology emphasizes how the juveniles can apply the learned skills to their lives. The curriculum is being delivered by contractual agreement currently to 11 noninstitutional programs. Four additional noninstitutional programs began the program in February 1999. The three institutions are delivering the curriculum with Commission

teaching staff.

Central Prep is the Commission's first regional school. Central Prep provides educational services in a simulated high school environment to juveniles from the Commission's Albert Elias, Florence Crittenton, and St. Joe's Residential Programs. Learning is conducted in a multisensory fashion utilizing various delivery systems, departmentalized programming, and a multimedia/technology based learning environment. The juvenile's academic experience is supplemented by activities including physical education, health education, introduction to the arts, vocational exposure, substance abuse education, and restorative justice ventures.

Effective July 1, 1998 the Commission became responsible for the delivery of educational services in county juvenile detention facilities. The Commission is responsible for the distribution of funds, allocated by the Department of Education, in accordance with the Comprehensive Improvement and Financing Act of 1996, N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-34 et seq. The Commission provides technical assistance and support to detention centers to ensure compliance with State and Federal educational mandates and monitors all local detention facilities in conjunction with the Department of Education.

## **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

The Commission initiated a Restorative Justice Project in November 1997. Restorative Justice is a balanced approach that recognizes that offenses are committed, not just against the State, but also involve victims and their communities. This project requires juvenile offenders to give something back to victims and the community and provides youth with skills to become productive, law abiding citizens.

The principles of Restorative Justice include the balancing of four areas: community

and public safety; teaching offenders accountability for their actions and holding them accountable; victim involvement through mediation and/or impact panels; and competency development.

Restorative Justice Project crime repair crews and community service teams provide approximately 2,000 service hours per month in communities throughout the State. The services are offered to victims, municipalities, local bodies of government and various social service agencies.

Project OPTION, offers two types of community relations teams comprised of JJC staff and youth who are selected for their ability to educate others and represent relevant issues to the public. The first component enables many organizations, e.g., schools, colleges, Boys Clubs, and probation, to bring youth who are at risk of system involvement for tours of NJTSB which are facilitated by JJC juveniles. The second component enables JJC noninstitutional programs staff and juveniles to appear as guest speakers at local events hosted by agencies including schools, community groups and court affiliated organizations.

The last component of Restorative Justice, victim-offender reconciliation, is currently under development. This component will bring victims and offenders together. Victims will be empowered to confront the issues associated with victimization, and the juvenile offenders will have an opportunity for personal and emotional development.

## **AFTERCARE/PAROLE SERVICES**

Aftercare/Parole Services provides individualized community-based services for each youth committed to the Commission. The program is designed to achieve a balanced approach toward handling juvenile parolees. This approach utilizes various techniques needed to maintain public safety as well as provide individualized services essential to

personal development and an acceptance of responsibility.

The program starts prior to institutional release with the development of a case plan by the Pre-Release Assessment Team. The case plan considers each participant's levels of risk and service needs requiring attention in efforts to reduce future offending.

A parole officer and youth worker, in conjunction with education specialists, manage participants in the community through specified levels of supervision based on the pre-release assessment and compliance with case plan objectives. The supervision is intensive, calling for an initial curfew of 7:00 p.m., eight face-to-face contacts during the first month of supervision of community supervision, drug screening, and restorative services through a community service requirement. Additional key elements of all supervision plans call for continued education toward a high school diploma and beyond, employment for those youth old enough, and individual and family counseling when determined appropriate.

Community involvement is another core element to the program. Aftercare/Parole Services recruits community volunteers to work one-on-one with program participants in the role of mentor. Mentors work closely with the youth and their families under the direction of the supervision teams. In 1998, more than half of all program participants worked with a community mentor while under Aftercare supervision.

A total of 868 juvenile offenders were released to Aftercare/Parole supervision in 1998 alone. Between May 1996 (when the program started) and December 1998, there were a total of 704 juveniles who completed their term of supervision. Of that total, 67.3% completed successfully. Approximately one in ten (10.7%) of the 704 terminations had their parole formally revoked by the State Parole Board.

As a result of tough enforcement, 190 (27.0%) of the 704 terminations were charged with parole violations for technical reasons (failure to remain drug free or comply with the

other requirements of the conditions of parole).

The following describes key components of Aftercare/Parole further.

### **Surveillance**

The surveillance aspects of the program are designed not only to provide a level of safety to the community but also to teach the participants accountability, responsibility and the need to adhere to specific rules and regulations. The various facets of surveillance include an enforced curfew, telephone contacts, face-to-face contacts, electronic monitoring, and frequent drug testing.

### **Graduated Sanctions**

Aftercare recognizes that, with varying degrees of frequency, participants will fail to comply with the stringent requirements imposed by both the State Parole Board, and their case plan. Measures employed by the supervision team in response to these infractions are designed to contribute to the resolution of the incident in a manner consistent with the goal of ensuring community safety.

Within a flexible structure of behavioral management, supervision team staff are trained to handle infractions using their sound professional judgement. Graduated sanctions offer a continuum of steps to respond appropriately to youth who violate the rules. The sanctions imposed are expected to be progressive and consistent. Whenever possible and appropriate, the supervision team works in conjunction with parents to impose required penalties. Included in the range of sanctions are (in order of restrictiveness): verbal reprimand, increased curfew, more frequent reporting, temporary placement in a residential program, and as a last resort, return to NJTSB.

### **Education**

Aftercare requires that all participants be in an educational program, employed or,

when feasible, both. A total of 63.8% of all participants were enrolled in some form educational program during their period of supervision. These programs ranged from special education programs, public school, and GED programs, to junior college and university. In December 1998, 53.2% of active program participants were enrolled in a school program.

### **Employment**

Employment provides a legitimate activity for much of the free time many juveniles use to get into trouble. It also provides a mechanism to earn monies to support themselves, assist their families, and pay court ordered fines and penalties. Over the course of their participation with Aftercare, almost half (49.3%) of the participants had some form of employment.

Approximately four of every five (78.6%) program participants were either employed, in an educational program, or both during their term of supervision in 1998.

### **Counseling**

Formal counseling sessions play a key role in the program's rehabilitative efforts. In excess of two-thirds of the juvenile offenders under supervision were enrolled in a formal counseling program during at least a part of their community supervision. The greatest number received drug abuse counseling, followed by general mental health counseling and family counseling.

### **Community Service**

It is the goal of the Aftercare/Parole program to have all participants fulfill some form of community service obligation as part of a restorative justice program.

## **STATE/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM AND**

## **COUNTY YOUTH SERVICES COMMISSIONS**

The Commission's enabling legislation established the State/Community Partnership Grant Program (Partnership) and the County Youth Services Commissions (CYSCs) in recognition of the need for active participation by counties in the advancement of the goals of juvenile justice system reform. (N.J.S.A. 52: 17B-179 and 180). The Partnership was established to make available fiscal incentives for county and local governments to establish prevention, intervention and aftercare services that address the root causes of delinquency and increase public safety by providing meaningful alternatives to juvenile crime.

### **State/Community Partnership Grant Program**

The Partnership legislation sets forth seven purposes. They include: development of sanctions and services and delinquency prevention programs to protect the public, ensure accountability and foster rehabilitation; increase the range of available sanctions; reduce overcrowding in state juvenile institutions to ensure adequate bed space for serious, violent and repetitive offenders; reduce overcrowding in county detention facilities; provide greater access to community-based sanctions and services for minority and female offenders; expand programs to prevent juvenile delinquency; and promote public safety by reducing recidivism (N.J.S.A. 52:17B-179).

The Commission is responsible for administering the Partnership, pursuant to which the Commission establishes criteria and procedures for grant applications and disbursement; determines county funding allocations; sets standards and procedures for eligibility, operation, supervision and evaluation; advises and assists the CYSCs in preparation of county plans and grant applications; awards grants; sets standards for and determines eligibility for continued Partnership funding; collects and provides information about community-based services and sanctions; and monitors and evaluates the

implementation of county plans and the provision of services, sanctions and programs (N.J.S.A. 52:17B-179).

### **Allocation and Expenditure of Partnership Funds**

The allocation formula developed in consultation with the counties includes an equal minimum base of \$75,000 for each county, plus a formula based on the extent of juvenile justice problems in each county comprised of: 1) the county's percentage of the State's youth population, 2) the county's percentage of the State's total juvenile arrests for violent Index crimes, and 3) the county's percentage of the State total of persons living below the poverty level. In addition, each county receives funds for Program Management, distributed in two tiers; 1) \$50,000 to the 11 counties which receive the largest fund distribution and 2) \$35,000 to the other 10 counties (see Table 7).

The annual \$3,650,000 Family Court Services Grant which has been available to the counties since 1986 has been fully integrated with the annual \$7,000,000 Partnership funding planning, contracting and monitoring requirements.

### **Role of the County Youth Services Commissions in Administering the Partnership Program**

The County Youth Services Commissions administer the Partnership program for the counties (N.J.S.A. 52:17B-180). This includes developing a biennial Comprehensive County Youth Services Plan, issuing Requests for Proposals to contract for programs in accordance with the county plans, coordinating sanctions and services for juveniles adjudicated or charged as delinquent and delinquency prevention programs, developing and implementing needed prevention and intervention programs, and monitoring and evaluating programs. Every Partnership contract is monitored on site at least once each year using a statewide monitoring tool. Also, CYSCs are responsible for coordinating with other county planning bodies and planning for aftercare services for juveniles returning to the community after



placement in Juvenile Justice Commission programs.

**Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs)**

Pursuant to regulations adopted by the Commission, N.J.A.C. 13: 90-1 et seq., CYSC~~3~~ may establish Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) to plan specific sanctions and services to individual youth as an alternative to pre-adjudication secure detention; as a



disposition option for consideration by the court after an adjudication of delinquency; and, as a component of Aftercare/Parole Services. Also, the procedures of the Partnership program allow counties to set aside funds for the purchase of client specific services and sanctions for individual juveniles in accordance with specific criteria. The target population for client specific services is juveniles referred through the juvenile justice system: 1) who have been charged with an offense and would otherwise await adjudication in secure detention; 2) juveniles who have been adjudicated delinquent and would otherwise be committed to the JJC; and/or 3) juveniles adjudicated delinquent and returning to the community after placement, with priority given to those in the JJC Aftercare program. Expenditures for client specific funds must be planned through an MDT.

Nineteen of the 21 counties have established at least one MDT. The teams have demonstrated their effectiveness in developing options for the court as alternatives to detention and for dispositions. MDTs and Partnership programs funded as alternatives to detention, together, have contributed to reducing detention overcrowding. This has been demonstrated specifically in Mercer and Middlesex counties. In 1997, the first full year of implementation of the MDTs and the Partnership programs, the average daily population in the Mercer County Detention Center declined by 37.7%; in Middlesex County, the decline in average daily population totaled 13.3%.

### **State/Community Partnership Program Data**

Beginning in January 1998, all programs receiving contracts with Partnership and Family Court Services funds were required to participate in a statewide Partnership Client Information System (PCIS). Information about each client served by the funded programs is entered into the system at intake and discharge. (Youths who were provided prevention or other services not requiring a formal intake are not included in the information system). For

the 1998 year, there was a total of 249 Partnership programs funded statewide. These programs included a total of 3,864 client intakes, representing a total of 3,512 individual juveniles served; some juveniles were provided more than one service.

The following provides a demographic profile of youth served by the Partnership funded programs.

**Age.** Youth served by the Partnership funded programs tended to be older adolescents, with a total of 62.3% ages 16 or older. The youth were most frequently 17 (24.9%) or 16 (23.4%) years of age. They were followed by youth ages 15 (17.5%), 18 and above (14.0%), 14 (8.9%), 12 and under (6.7%), and 13 (4.6%).

**Gender.** Largely consistent with gender differences in juvenile arrests, 78.9% of the youth were male, 21.1% female.

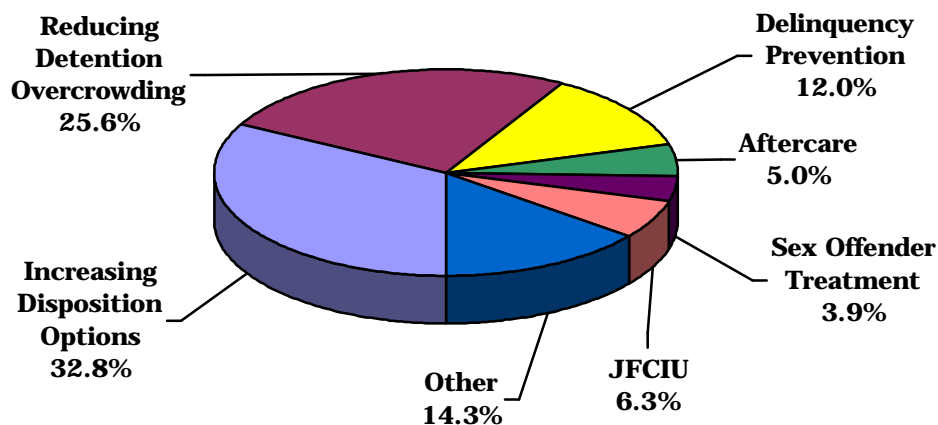
**Race/Ethnicity.** More than half (54.8%) of youth were minority or inter-racial; 45.2 were White non-Hispanic. Specifically, African Americans accounted for 36.9% of the total; Hispanic youth, 14.2%; Inter-racial youth, 2.0%; Asian youth, 0.6%; American Indian youth, 0.2%; and Other youth, 0.8%.

Following is the list of the program categories in which Partnership programs are funded and the number of programs funded and juveniles served in those categories in 1998 (in order of highest number of programs funded). The figures reflect the overall priority given to the goals of increasing disposition options and reducing detention overcrowding, as the two areas account for 58.4% of all program intakes during 1998. The specific programs funded by the counties in each of the program categories appear in the Appendix.

?? **Increasing disposition options (58 programs funded; 1,268 intakes)** -- Community-based alternatives to incarceration for youth adjudicated delinquent which expand the range of sanctions and rehabilitative services, such as, intensive supervision, in-home services, day reporting centers, educational and vocational services.

- ?? **Reducing detention overcrowding (51 programs funded; 989 intakes)** -- Development or expansion of detention alternatives such as in-home detention, electronic monitoring, day reporting programs, nonsecure residential alternatives.
- ?? **Delinquency Prevention (37 programs funded; 465 intakes)** -- Activities directed at youth at risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system which involve the community, education, social services, law enforcement and local government.
- ?? **Aftercare (14 programs funded; 195 intakes)** -- Transition services for committed juveniles and probationers returning to the community from institutional and noninstitutional programs.
- ?? **Treatment for sexually abusive juveniles (12 programs funded; 151 intakes)** -- Assessment, treatment and aftercare services for sexually abusive juveniles involved or at risk of involvement with the Family Court.
- ?? **Juvenile/Family Crisis Intervention Units (JFCIU) services (12 programs funded; 243 intakes)** -- Programs which divert cases from the Family Court by

**Number of Intakes in Partnership Funded Programs,  
by Program Category, 1998**



providing troubled juveniles and their families an opportunity to resolve conflicts and receive needed services.

Funded programs are asked to report on the problems of the juveniles referred to

them. A checklist of potential problem areas is provided for that purpose. Juveniles admitted into Partnership funded programs in 1998 were identified as having an average of 9.7 problems. This result is consistent with existing evidence of the multiple needs of the delinquent and at-risk populations, and largely consistent with widely shared conceptions concerning significant causes and correlates of delinquency.

The problems most often identified by service providers (ranked by most prevalent) are: difficulty in controlling youth's own behavior (50.8%), delinquent friends (44.8%), poor problem solving skills (41.4%), drug abuse (39.4%), poor school performance (39.0%), no/few positive friends (38.7%), poor anger management (37.7%), poor frustration tolerance (32.2%), low self-esteem (31.7%), and disruptive behavior in school (30.6%).

Providers utilized a checklist (to be completed upon termination from the program) of delivered services. The most frequently provided services were (ranked in order of prevalence): individual counseling (23.1%), family counseling (18.6%), group counseling (18.3%), advocacy (17.2%), substance abuse evaluation (16.7%), decision making skills training (15.8%), anger management training (14.9%), crisis intervention services (14.5%), case management services (13.7%), urine monitoring (12.1%), and intensive supervision (11.4%).

There was a total of 2,427 funded program completions during 1998. Of those, 1,233 (50.8%) were reported as involving a successful discharge from the programs. Of those reported to have left for negative reasons, 100 involved expulsions for serious infractions of the rules, 206 involved referrals to a more restrictive setting, and 102 involved incarceration, for a total of 408. The remaining 786 left the programs for a variety of reasons.

The extensive program development and expansion (and the number of youth served) reflected in the 1998 figures demonstrates progress has been made toward achieving the

objectives of the Partnership legislation. In future years, the PCIS (along with the Program's extensive monitoring procedures currently in place) will allow the JJC and County Youth Services Commissions to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the overall impact of the Partnership both in terms of achieving system goals and impacting court-involved and at-risk youth.

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAM**

The Commission's Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) program administers the federal funding received pursuant to the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, as amended (Act). The Act establishes three distinct funding categories: Title II Formula Grant funds; Title V Delinquency Prevention Grant funds; and State Challenge Activity Grant funds.

Participation in the Title II Formula Grant program is predicated upon State compliance with the Act's four core requirements: 1) juveniles must not be confined in any county or municipal jail or lock-up; 2) juveniles must not be mingled among adult prisoners; 3) truant, incorrigible and run-away youth must not be confined in physically secure facilities with delinquents or criminals; and, 4) the State must make reasonable efforts to address any disproportionate confinement of minority youth in secure facilities.

New Jersey's compliance with the core requirements is monitored by the Commission's Compliance Monitoring Unit, which is funded through the JJDP program. This unit is responsible for preparing and maintaining standards for the operation of juvenile detention facilities in the State and through monitoring, ensuring compliance with the standards. This unit also participates in, reviews, and approves physical plant improvements at existing facilities and construction of new juvenile detention facilities.

Additionally, the unit is responsible for reviewing critical incidents involving juvenile detainees based on reports filed either by the facilities and/or by the DYFS Institutional Abuse Investigation Unit.

The Act further requires that there be a State Advisory Group appointed by the Governor to oversee implementation of the JJDP Act in the State. New Jersey's State Advisory Group is the NJ Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Committee which has functioned since 1976.

New Jersey receives approximately \$2.4 million annually in formula grant funds, which, as required by the Act, are used primarily for the funding of local delinquency prevention and treatment programs, generally for a term of three years with decreasing levels of funding. A percentage of the funding is earmarked for programming which produces statewide improvements to the juvenile justice system.

The JJDP Committee has encouraged mandatory cross-cultural training for all levels of staffing in the educational, social service and juvenile justice systems to develop cultural sensitivities and competencies to enhance staff abilities to relate to and plan services for minority clients. The Committee also reviews Comprehensive County Youth Services Plans and summarizes counties' responses to minority overrepresentation. The information is used to assist in decision making relating to local funding targets to address the issue, and to provide technical assistance in addressing the problem. Funding has been used consistently over the past four years to encourage the development of local programs to address the overrepresentation of minority youth in secure confinement in both county detention centers and state juvenile correctional facilities.

Title V of the Act provides funding for Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs. These funds are designated for comprehensive delinquency prevention



planning and programming at the local level based on the Communities That Care (CTC) risk focused prevention model. New Jersey receives approximately \$562,000 annually under Title V.

State Challenge Grants represent the newest federal juvenile justice program initiative. The State has been awarded approximately \$262,000 annually to examine statewide detention practices and gender specific services for adolescent females.

The Detention Reform Project has as its overall goals to improve the statewide detention system and alleviate detention crowding where it exists, through the collection and analysis of relevant county level data. A Detention Reform Task Force, comprised of various representatives involved with juvenile justice is serving in an advisory capacity to the Commission. Project staff has examined detention policy and practice as they relate to the problem of detention facility crowding throughout the State through a review of snapshot data of juveniles in detention on a given day and extensive surveys and interviews of key actors that addressed issues including the context of secure juvenile detention, law enforcement, admissions policies and practices, system barriers to timely release from secure detention, detention alternatives, and, suggested solutions to identified detention issues. The first phase of the project involved an in-depth assessment of seven counties' detention programs. Following the completion of the first phase, similar (though less detailed) information on detention was collected from the remaining fourteen counties.

A Final Report of the Detention Reform Task Force will be submitted to the Executive Director in March 1999, after which planning for the implementation of the various recommendations will begin. Additionally, the Detention Reform Project has compiled the first National Directory of Detention Alternatives, a publication which will be available through the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The Gender Specific Services project ensures that juvenile females have access to a full range of services and fosters efforts to reduce gender bias. The goals are to increase public awareness of and sensitivity to the unique needs and issues of juvenile females; to develop policies and procedures that ensure access to a full range of gender specific services, programs and opportunities for New Jersey's juvenile females; to ensure the protection of juvenile females in New Jersey; and to introduce juvenile females to their own culture and to increase their knowledge of the effects of pregnancy, substance abuse, crime and incarceration. Under this initiative, a statewide conference is held annually for about 250 female juveniles to increase their awareness of their assets and to explore issues and concerns of interest to them.

The JJDP Committee has also provided funding to the Commission to examine its classification process (as described supra at 55). The focus of the project is to enhance the current classification process through the development and implementation of an objectively based classification system that utilizes standardized classification instruments. Project staff is currently testing a classification instrument developed with input from key policy makers, juvenile justice practitioners and classification experts. A reclassification instrument is under development. The project also includes the development of a juvenile offender risk/needs instrument.

State and local projects currently funded through the Act are set forth in Table 8. The projects reflect a variety of programs that respond to the following funded program areas of the Act:

- ?? **Serious Crime** - to prevent adjudicated delinquents from being placed in secure confinement by helping communities develop community-based alternatives and graduated sanctions as alternatives to correctional and long-term out-of-home placement as well as adequate resources to meet the needs of youth returning from placement.

- ?? **Minority Overrepresentation** - to address the disproportionate minority confinement core requirement of the JJDP Act by reducing the number of African American and Hispanic youth confined in county juvenile detention centers and State run juvenile correctional facilities.
- ?? **Innovative Local Law Enforcement Community Policing** - to support, enhance, develop and implement innovative local law enforcement and community policing programs that focus on the prevention and control of delinquency.
- ?? **Systems Improvement** - to develop initiatives designed to examine issues, policies, procedures and program development for youth in secure confinement and youth being waived to adult court which will result in a more effective and efficient system of care for these youth.
- ?? **Training** - to increase the performance of professionals, paraprofessionals, line staff, volunteers, parents, community leaders and advocates by providing specialized training which will enhance their ability to provide quality child care and programming for at-risk and delinquent youth.

**TABLE 8**  
**JJDP Funded Projects**

<b>Juvenile Justice Commission JJDP Funded Projects as of 12/30/98</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Federal Funding</b>	<b>Local Match</b>
<b>Atlantic County Ministers Home Detention</b> - Provides intensive community supervision, monitoring and mentoring services as an alternative to detention for 75 Atlantic City, Egg Harbor and Pleasantville youth.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 67,000</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Atlantic County Predispositional Home Treatment Program</b> - Provides in-home family treatment services to 60 youth on in-home detention through electronic monitoring.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 30,500</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Atlantic County Second Chance Minority Mentoring</b> - Provides aftercare mentoring services to 18 high risk African American and Hispanic youth, ages 10-15, who have completed detention alternative programs.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 19,965</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Camden City Communities That Care Project: Winning</b> is a delinquency prevention program with a variety of services targeting 150 youth and 75 families in the Centerville, Morgan Village and Fairview communities.	<b>JJDP Title V Funds</b>	<b>\$121,000</b>	<b>\$60,500</b>
<b>Camden County Jointly Uplifting Services That Increase Courage &amp; Empowerment (JUSTICE)</b> - Provides a full range of services to 85 detained youth and their families as an alternative to detention with the objective of reducing the number of juveniles committed to correctional facilities	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$357,105</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Camden County Family Alternative In The Home - FAITH</b> - Provides home detention with intensive supervision, home based individual and family counseling, life skills training and educational advocacy for 75 youth awaiting disposition and at risk of confinement in the juvenile detention center.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 50,000</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Cumberland County Juvenile Confinement Alternative Program</b> - Provides intensive supervision, monitoring, mentoring, job placement, after school activities and community services as an alternative to detention for 35 minority youth.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 42,000</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Hudson County Effective Latino Parenting Program</b> - Provides parenting training and case management for 30 Latino parents with juvenile justice system involved youth.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 32,000</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Mercer County Family Builders Program</b> - Provides intensive, in-home intervention services to 32 minority youth and their families.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 73,489</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Middlesex County PROJECT YES (Youth Enterprise and Security)</b> - Provides an alternative to commitment to secure correctional facilities through a structured community-based alternative providing a variety of intensive supportive services	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$291,000</b>	<b>N/A</b>

to 45 juvenile offenders.			
<b>Juvenile Justice Commission JJDP Funded Projects as of 12/30/98</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Federal Funding</b>	<b>Local Match</b>
<b>Monmouth County Project CARE</b> - Targets elementary and middle school students in Asbury Park, Keansburg, Neptune and Long Branch. The program teaches conflict resolution strategies and violence prevention skills to almost 1,000 youth each school year and provides parenting information and skills development to approximately 100 parents.	<b>JJDP Title V Funds</b>	<b>\$ 43,000</b>	<b>\$21,500</b>
<b>Monmouth County Changing Courses and Directions</b> - Provides an alternatives to confinement in secure detention and correctional facilities by providing intensive community-based treatment and support services to 30 youth, 11 to 15, and their families from Asbury Park.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$108,000</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Newark Project Restore</b> - Provides day treatment services, in-home family therapy and intensive case management for 10 youth in danger of commitment to secure confinement.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 88,971</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Passaic County Home Detention Program</b> - Provides electronic monitoring as a detention alternative to 70 youth.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$102,000</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Paterson Police Juvenile Justice Village Initiative</b> - Provides police escort and security enforcement for probation and parole officers while they are conducting home and field visits and serving warrants, coordinates street sweeps and works to develop a safe haven with recreational and athletic programs for probationers and parolees.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 97,200</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Perth Amboy Project Grey</b> - Prevents gang involvement of middle school youth in Perth Amboy through peer leadership training for 20 youth annually and peer mediation sessions and youth symposia for approximately 200 youth.	<b>JJDP Title V Funds</b>	<b>\$ 34,500</b>	<b>\$17,250</b>
<b>Piscataway Township Safe Community</b> - Targets handgun violence and gang activity reduction by providing crisis mediation, recreational activities, prevention education, group counseling and peer leadership training for 500 high school and selected middle school students.	<b>JJDP Title V Funds</b>	<b>\$ 24,700</b>	<b>\$12,350</b>
<b>Union County Females First</b> - Targets 30 juvenile females 10-14 years of age residing in the Elizabethport section of Elizabeth by providing a comprehensive after school program including leadership development, drug/alcohol education, homework assistance, mentoring, computer education and career exploration.	<b>JJDP Title V Funds</b>	<b>\$ 65,453</b>	<b>\$32,726</b>
<b>West Caldwell Township Project CADY</b> - Serves as an alternative to detention commitment for 20 minority youth ages 11-15 from Newark with the provision of supportive supervision and support services.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$102,000</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Juvenile Justice Commission JJDP Funded Projects as of 12/30/98</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Federal Funding</b>	<b>Local Match</b>

<b>Woodbridge Early Steps Program</b> - Teaches effective parenting skills to 25 Woodbridge Garden parents with pre-schoolers and provides educational activities designed to increase school readiness, mathematics and reading skills for approximately 50 children.	<b>JJDP Title V Funds</b>	<b>\$ 41,600</b>	<b>\$20,800</b>
<b>Administrative Office of the Courts Paterson Juvenile Justice Village Initiative</b> - To improve enforcement of court orders and services to at least 100 juvenile probationers by referring them to appropriate services, including GED, vocation and employment training, by increasing home visits and coordinating the community's response to juvenile offenders.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 81,694</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Juvenile Justice Commission Aftercare/Parole Juvenile Justice Village Initiative</b> - Focuses on 30 high risk parolees from Paterson providing job search and placement assistance, restorative justice/community services activities and mentoring as well as increased monitoring and home visits.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 15,556</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Juvenile Justice Commission Classification Initiative</b> - Is developing an objective classification system for kids committed to secure care through the piloting, assessment and implementation of a classification instrument and an examination and enhancement of current classification, needs and risk assessment processes.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$117,402</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Juvenile Justice Commission Compliance Monitoring</b> - Conducts on-site monitoring of all juvenile detention facilities, county jails, workhouses and state juvenile correctional facilities on an annual basis in order to collect data to determine the extent to which facilities and institution comply with the core requirements (deinstitutionalization of status and nonoffenders; separation of juveniles from adults; and jail removal) of the JJDP Act. The annual monitoring report is used to determine New Jersey's eligibility for continued funding under the Act.	<b>JJDP Formula Grant Funds</b>	<b>\$ 78,332</b>	<b>N/A</b>

## **GRANTS MANAGEMENT**

The Commission's Grants Management Unit is responsible for seeking grant funding for initiatives that support the Commission's mission. The Grants Management Unit researches funding sources and reviews grant announcements to identify those which will coincide with the needs of the Commission. Funds are sought for staff training, education initiatives to benefit juveniles served by the JJC, development of new program initiatives (e.g., Restorative Justice, AmeriCorps), capital projects (e.g., building refurbishing), transitional programs (i.e., to reintegrate committed youth back to the community), etc. As of December 1, 1998, the Commission has been awarded \$11,037,075 (including match) in grant funding. Table 9 includes a description of current grant funded projects.

**TABLE 9**

**Juvenile Justice Commission Grant Funding Utilization**

<b>Juvenile Justice Commission Grant Funding Utilization as of 12/1/98</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Grant Period</b>	<b>Federal or State Funding</b>	<b>JJC Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>AmeriCorps</b> - Twenty juveniles who have completed a Commission program, are age 17 and have demonstrated leadership qualities and interest in pursuing their education are chosen to become AmeriCorps Members and Junior Mentors for the juveniles in the Commission's programs. The AmeriCorps Member receives a living allowance of \$8,340 and upon completion of 1700 of hours of service, receives an education award of \$4,725.	<b>National &amp; Community Service Trust Act of 1993.</b>  <b>N.J. D.O.E. State Commission on National &amp; Community Service</b>	<b>9/1/98 - 8/31/99</b>	<b>\$223,464</b>  <b>(Second year of three years)</b>	<b>\$57,048 cash</b> <b>\$60,800 in-kind</b>	<b>\$341,312</b>
<b>Family Preservation &amp; Support Services</b> - Funding utilized to provide Family Preservation Services to juveniles on Parole/Aftercare. Funding contracted to 7 counties to be utilized by MDT's to provide client specific services.	<b>Title IV-B Social Security Act</b>  <b>N.J. DHS</b>	<b>9/1/97 - 8/30/99</b>	<b>\$105,500</b> <b>(2nd year replacement of funds spent)</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$105,500</b>
<b>Hayes - Boot Camp Orientation</b> Funding to renovate the Hayes Building at the Johnstone Facility.	<b>U.S. Dept. Of Justice - Office of Justice Programs</b> <b>1995 Corrections Boot Camp Initiative</b>	<b>10/1/97- 12/31/99</b>	<b>\$1,000,000</b>	<b>\$333,333</b>	<b>\$1,333,333</b>
<b>JJDP - Classification Project</b> - Continuation of project to pilot, assess, and implement the initial classification instrument; develop instruments and enhance process for re-classification and offender need/risk assessments.	<b>OJJDP - Systems Improvement</b>  <b>JJDP</b>	<b>10/1/98- 9/30/99</b>	<b>\$117,402</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$117,402</b>
<b>JJDP - Compliance Monitoring Unit</b> - monitors compliance with the core requirements of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act.	<b>OJJDP - JJDP</b>	<b>7/1/98- 6/30/99</b>	<b>\$78,332</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$ 78,332</b>
<b>JJDP - Juvenile Justice Village Initiative</b> - Provides funding for Parole Officers Overtime to work with local police ,	<b>OJJDP- JJDP</b>	<b>1/1/98 - 6/30/99</b>	<b>\$15,556</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$ 15,556</b>



probation, prosecutors, community in Patterson to redirect high risk juveniles in a productive direction thru intensive supervision and assistance.					
<b>JTPA - Camden County</b> - provides for a Workforce Transition Specialist who will concentrate on employability development, job placement, and follow up for retention in the job.	<b>JTPA - Camden County</b>	<b>12/1/97 - 11/30/98 (being extended)</b>	<b>\$48,761</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$48,761</b>
<b>JTPA - Burlington County</b> - to provide training for juveniles at the Burlington Day Program as carpenters Helpers.	<b>JTPA - Burlington County</b>	<b>9/1/98- 6/30/99</b>	<b>\$59,760</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$59,760</b>
<b>Juvenile Risk Reduction Initiative</b> - utilizes an education curriculum aimed at changing beliefs/behaviors that lead to violence, drug abuse/dependence, school and social failure and criminal behavior.	<b>Title IV: the safe &amp; Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act N.J. DOE</b>	<b>2/1/98- 1/31/99</b>	<b>\$225,000</b>  <b>(4th year of 5 year funding)</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$225,000</b>
<b>Live Scan Device - Central Intake</b> - funds to purchase Live Scan device to upgrade fingerprint processing system which interfaces with State Police and other law enforcement.	<b>Byrne Memorial Block Grant - Five Percent Set Aside DL&amp;PS Division Criminal Justice</b>	<b>5/26/98- 6/30/99</b>	<b>\$63,861</b>	<b>\$23,127</b>	<b>\$85,148</b>
<b>Parenting and Child Nurturing Grant</b> - provides parenting and child nurturing classes for juveniles at the JMSF secure facility who are parents or have parental responsibilities	<b>N.J. DHS - Prevention of Developmental Disabilities Public Education</b>	<b>7/1/98- 6/30/99</b>	<b>\$20,500</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$20,500</b>
<b>National Sex Offender Registry</b> - to purchase a mug shot system for Central Reception.	<b>BJS National Sex Offender Registry Assistance Program</b>		<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Juvenile Justice Commission Grant Funding Utilization as of 12/1/98</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Grant Period</b>	<b>Federal or State Funding</b>	<b>JJC Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program - Alpha Meta (males)</b> - a 52 bed unit at the NJTS is designated as a therapeutic community to provide comprehensive substance abuse treatment .	<b>U.S. Dept. Of Justice - Residential Substance Abuse Treatment for State Prisoners Grant Program DL&amp;PS - Division of Criminal Justice</b>	<b>9/19/98- 9/18/99</b>	<b>\$276,077</b>	<b>\$92,026</b>	<b>\$368,103</b>

<b>Residential Substance Abuse Treatment - Services for Females</b> - just received notification of funding program not yet implemented.	same as above		\$299,360 (2nd year of 4 yr cycle)	\$99,787	\$399,147
<b>Restorative Justice Informational Forums</b> - to provide Statewide Informational Forums re the Restorative Justice Philosophy for victims, community members, the faith community, judges, prosecutors, and other law enforcement and how they can play a role in the Restorative Justice process.	VOCA funds DL&PS - State Office of Victim- Witness Advocacy	4/1/98- 9/30/99	\$100,000	\$25,000 (cash & in-kind)	\$125,000
<b>Restorative Justice Project</b> - establishes structured opportunities for victims, communities and offenders to actively participate in a process of repairing the harm created by the offenders?actions through implementation of a Restorative Justice approach to addressing public safety, rehabilitation and sanctioning goals of the juvenile justice system.	Byrne Formula Grant Program - DL&PS - Division of Criminal Justice	3/5/98- 7/17/98	\$382,913	\$127,638	\$510,551
<b>Revenue Collection System</b> - to provide the computer hardware/software necessary to enhance the Commission's ability to collect fines due to victims.	VOCA funds State Office of Victim-Witness Advocacy	7/1/98- 6/30/99	\$75,000	\$18,750 in-kind	\$93,750
<b>VOI/TIS - RFP</b> for 100 beds Transitional Living & Alternative to Re-Incarceration for Parolees.	VOI/TIS	9/30/96- 9/29/02	\$5,304,375	\$589,375	\$5,893,375
<b>Education Funding:</b>					
<b>Carl Perkins</b> - funds to continue connecting classrooms to the Internet by providing hardware, software, and necessary professional development activities.	N.J. Dept. Of Education - Office of School - to-Careers and College Initiatives	7/1/98- 6/30/99	\$48,656	n/a	\$48,656
<b>Juvenile Justice Commission Grant Funding Utilization as of 12/1/98</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Grant Period</b>	<b>Federal or State Funding</b>	<b>JJC Match</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>IDEA</b> - supplemental education funding to the handicap population.	N.J. Dept. Of Education - Office of Special Education	9/1/98- 8/31/99	\$240,039	n/a	\$240,039
<b>ISA Chapter I</b> - continuation of supplemental programs which includes funding for Teaching Assistants, Transition Specialists and Basic Skills	N.J. Dept. Of Education - ISA - Chapter I	9/1/98 - 8/31/99	\$902,850	n/a	\$902,850

Tutorial program.					
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TOTAL GRANT FUNDING (including match)    **\$11,037,075**

# **JUVENILE JUSTICE MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION**

The following provides a list of recommendations regarding desired strategies for implementation by the Commission. Implementation, and timing and pace of implementation of a number of the recommendations, rely on required appropriations and related prioritization.

### **1) *Implement a Comprehensive and Balanced Plan to Respond to Shortages of Institutional and Noninstitutional Beds and Projections of Continued Growth in Bed Need.***

The JJC should implement a comprehensive and balanced plan to respond to severe shortages of existing JJC beds (institutional and noninstitutional) and projections of continued moderate growth in demands for custodial placement with the Commission.

The plan helps ensure that the Commission meets its mandate to provide for the public safety through a mix of institutional and noninstitutional facilities and program settings, while also fostering offender accountability and rehabilitation within a safe and clean environment. This plan also reflects the Commission's determination to create a balanced response so as to avoid a more extensive and expensive capital plan regarding expansion of institutional bed capacity. The plan includes a multi-pronged, multi-year effort to: increase available institutional bed space within the JJC; restructure the use of existing bed space and day programs within the JJC and revise related policies and practices; and increase available bed space and related programming at the county level through the use of State funding as incentives for local program development targeted at youth who would be more appropriately handled at the local level than through more expensive placement with the JJC.

In recent years, there has been a growing shortage of JJC beds in the face of

increasing demand. Over the last two years (between 1996 and 1998), average JJC bed need (for institutional and noninstitutional beds) increased from 1,349 to 1,402, a growth of 4%. The increase in total bed need has exacerbated crowded conditions in the institutional facilities (populated at 117% of capacity) and in the noninstitutional programs (populated at 107% of capacity). In addition, it leads to a backlog in admitting to the JJC both committed youth and youth ordered into JJC noninstitutional programs by the court. Both categories of youth are, largely, incarcerated at the county level in youth detention facilities and adult jails, awaiting placement in the JJC. While the JJC has successfully decreased this backlog of committed youth awaiting placement over recent months, it has done so at the expense of increased facility overcrowding. Juvenile population at NJTSB averaged 509 for 1998; its design capacity is 404.

On average, there was an estimated shortage of 246 beds in 1998 (a total bed need of 1,402 compared with a total bed capacity of 1,156). This includes an estimated shortage of 134 institutional beds and 112 noninstitutional beds. In addition, projected annual growth in bed need is estimated at 27 per year. This projection is based on comparing the average bed need over the most recent two year period, i.e., from 1996 to 1998. Note, however, that average bed need increased by 55 between 1997 and 1998 alone; bed need remained virtually unchanged between 1996 and 1997. Projected gains translate into an estimated annual growth in bed need of 16 institutional beds and 11 noninstitutional beds; this breakdown is based on recent findings of a Commission project examining initial classification decisions regarding its committed youth.

The projected level of growth does not include potential significant growth in the JJC population expected to result from full implementation of the statutory requirement for committed youth to serve an additional community supervision term of one-third the length

of their sentence. This may lead to a substantial increase in parole violations, and subsequent returns to JJC institutions.

The comprehensive plan to address rising bed needs includes the following interrelated strategies.

**A) *Increase JJC institutional bed capacity by building two state of the art 144 bed facilities for serious juvenile offenders (with support buildings, e.g., educational, health, food and other services).***

Both facilities would be operational by the year 2002. During this period, NJTSB would be downsized from its current capacity of 404 to 300 (consistent with a recommendation of the December 1997 Report of the Advisory Committee to Study the Future of the New Jersey Training School for Boys in Monroe Township).<sup>8</sup> The downsizing of NJTSB alongside the current shortage of 246 brings the shortfall of beds to 350 (without considering projected growth in the need for institutional and noninstitutional beds). The plan to build two 144 bed facilities is an increase of 288 beds, and serves to substantially close the gap between the current level of JJC bed need and bed capacity. The estimated cost of each of the 144 bed facilities would include a total of \$12.7 million in capital costs and \$5.3 million in first year operating costs (\$4.3 million subsequent annual operating costs).

**B) *Initiate a State incentive program (similar to the existing State/Community Partnership Grant Program) administered by the JJC, funding counties to plan and develop community corrections programming for select youth who would otherwise become the responsibility of the JJC.***

This would include less expensive alternatives to commitment and placements with

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<sup>8</sup>Plans exist to renovate the Hayes building on the Johnstone site for dual use as a reception unit for incoming youth bound for Commission noninstitutional programs, and as a replacement for the existing SRP Orientation Unit.

the JJC (e.g., residential group homes; highly structured day programs; intensive probation supervision programs). A minimum of five to ten million dollars annually (in addition to funding provided through the Partnership) would be set aside for this program. The funds would be distributed, at least in part, on a formula basis. In addition, portions of the funding could be offered on an RFP basis to address particular needs, to be applied for by individual counties or groups of counties on a regional basis. The specific nature and determination of the allocation of funds to counties is of significant importance. Discussion will be required to identify the most effective and fair disposition of funds. Discussion will also be required to determine the efficacy of utilizing county disincentives (for using State correctional resources) alongside the proposed incentives discussed here.

Programming would focus on the general offender population, although it could also address programming for special needs populations (e.g., sex offenders; juveniles with mental health problems). Funding would be closely monitored to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in serving to provide the appropriate level of supervision in the counties. Continued funding and participation by a county would be tied to successful achievement of the goal of reducing State commitments and placements, along with the program's ability to adequately address the goals of public safety, offender accountability and rehabilitation.

This approach is consistent with similar strategies developed in a number of states that have developed "Community Corrections Act" legislation to provide incentives to local government to plan for and develop programs that divert adult and/or juvenile offenders from expensive State incarceration. The recent (and acclaimed) Reclaim Ohio effort is one of the latest examples of this strategy.

This approach, in addition, is a step beyond the current State/Community Partnership Grant Program. The Partnership funds a broad range of programs focusing on

such areas as reducing county detention overcrowding, increasing dispositional options for the court, and prevention. The early results of the Partnership are encouraging and suggestive of the usefulness of utilizing State incentives programs to achieve desired goals.

**C) *Establish a specially funded interdepartmental program development effort to plan for and develop high priority programs for select special needs populations who are under the jurisdiction of the JJC as juvenile offenders.***

The JJC and each of the divisions within DHS have expertise in working with certain juvenile populations. The Commission and DHS have worked collaboratively on individual cases and have also collaborated in program development and implementation efforts. Despite these efforts, there are occasional interdivisional and interdepartmental disputes regarding responsibility for an individual juvenile, particularly when he or she is a special needs juvenile before the court for disposition.

Many of the special needs juveniles placed under the care and supervision of the Juvenile Justice Commission present a *combination* of needs that extend beyond any one agency's area of expertise, budgetary capabilities and available resources. Ability to adequately address these needs within the current system and system resources is limited. Youth with special needs are likely to make lifelong demands on the juvenile justice and human service systems if attention to appropriate rehabilitative efforts is lacking.

An ongoing special interagency appropriation tied to a collaboration, planning and program development effort for special needs juvenile offenders would improve the juvenile justice system's ability to deflect this population from serious and lengthy careers as juvenile and adult offenders.

The programs developed through the interagency funding mechanism would be solely or jointly administered/contracted by the JJC and the appropriate State agency or agencies with experience and expertise in dealing with youth who have mental health



problems or have a low IQ, juvenile sex offenders, and those who are severely learning disabled. The initiative would include funding for one or more State run or contracted facilities to serve the relevant populations. The interdepartmental group would prioritize the programmatic needs among these populations, and determine appropriate operational responsibility for the State run and other program(s). The Administrative Office of the Courts would participate in priority setting and planning with DYFS, DDD, DMHS, DHSS and the JJC (which would have a leadership role).

Note additional recommendations regarding special needs populations are provided below.

**D) *Increase the accessibility of existing JJC noninstitutional beds for youth committed to the Commission.***

Currently, JJC noninstitutional programs serve both committed youth and youth placed into these programs by the court (while the youth are also on probation status). The average number of probationers in JJC noninstitutional program beds on any given day in 1998 was 325, comprising 58% of the average daily population of those programs. Development of the community incentives programming noted above (B.) would free up a substantial number of JJC noninstitutional beds by expanding local probation options for judges to access, decreasing the necessity of relying on JJC placements. This strategy could substantially increase the number of JJC noninstitutional beds for committed youth, and improve its continuum of sanctions and services.

**E) *Increase the accessibility of existing JJC day programs for youth committed to the Commission.***

Currently, JJC day programs serve both committed youth transitioning from institutional or noninstitutional placements and probationers placed the court. The JJC should take a proactive role in assisting and encouraging the counties in setting up day

treatment programs and/or day reporting centers. Counties should be encouraged to use funds provided through B. above and the Partnership Program to create day treatment programs and/or day reporting centers serving as alternatives to State incarceration and as detention alternatives. Development of the county alternatives to State incarceration would free up a substantial number of existing JJC day program slots. The current JJC day program slots could be utilized for transitional purposes, further preparing committed youth for their release and return to the community.

**F) *Enhance the JJC classification process for placing and moving committed youth within the JJC custody system.***

The JJC should institute a structured (objective) classification system to help ensure fair, consistent and appropriate placement of youth who have been committed to the JJC by the court. An objective classification instrument would help determine the types of offenders who would be appropriate for noninstitutional placement within the context of the Commission's goals of public safety, offender accountability and offender rehabilitation.

Recent research conducted by the JJC indicates that a large portion of committed juveniles who are placed in institutions, at least initially, are not committed on a violent offense, nor on one of the most serious categories of offenses (first or second degree offenses, violent or otherwise). According to the study, just under a third (32%) of juveniles committed to the JJC were committed on a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> offense. Including the somewhat less serious 3<sup>rd</sup> offenses, the figure increases to 66% of the committed juveniles. With specific reference to violent persons offenses (1<sup>st</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup>), a total of 29%, were committed on a violent offense as their most serious offense, while a larger group, just over half (55%), had been adjudicated delinquent on a violent offense at any time in their history. These findings seem to indicate that some portion of youth currently held in costly institutions could be safely placed in a staff secure (less expensive) noninstitutional setting. Therefore, the

enhanced classification process would be used to make the most appropriate placement within the range of JJC facilities.

**G) *Modify current practice of returning juvenile parole violators to New Jersey Training School for Boys while they await probable cause and parole revocation hearings.*** Juvenile parole violators are currently returned to NJTSB pending a determination on revocation of parole status. There were 234 parole violators returned in 1998; a large proportion were returned for technical violations of parole (e.g., failure to comply with conditions relating to curfew, school or employment attendance, or failed tests for substance abuse). A process should be developed to identify those youth who can be safely placed in a noninstitutional setting. The result would be a small shift away from institutional bed needs.

The above changes would increase JJC institutional bed capacity, decrease JJC institutional and noninstitutional bed need, and shift the balance of institutional vs. noninstitutional bed utilization by the JJC. Taken together, these changes would address the existing bed shortage and overcrowding, and help the JJC to limit the expected level of growth in population demand over the next few years. These changes would be consistent with the JJC's goal of adequately meeting the security and supervision needs of the juveniles in its care and custody.

### **Cost Considerations**

The above plan should be seen within the context of the range of JJC facility and program costs, and related costs of select judicial options to placement with the JJC. The following JJC operating costs include salary and nonsalary costs. The figures do not include any facility lease or capital costs; they are exclusive of administrative costs as well.

The figures are fiscal year 1998 budget revised figures (rounded). Note that the figures do not reflect actual per youth expenditures which rely on varied lengths of stay.

The traditional large institution tends to be the most costly correctional option at the State level. The greatest portion of youth committed to the JJC are supervised and cared for at NJTSB. The per diem cost at NJTSB is \$125 (\$45,625 annually). The remaining institutions, JMSF and its co-located Valentine (female) facility, are substantially more costly, with a joint estimated cost of \$172 a day (\$62,780 annually).

The Stabilization & Reintegration Program is slightly less costly than NJTSB, with a per diem cost of \$117 (\$42,705 annually) for the combined custody component. The length of stay in the custodial portion of SRP is substantially shorter than the typical stay at the institutions. JJC noninstitutional residential and day program costs are substantially lower than the facility costs noted above. The average per diem cost of JJC noninstitutional residential programs is \$87 (\$31,755 annually). An estimated \$3 per diem, in addition, is expended on contract services, which includes, for example, contracting for individual treatment/counseling services of a psychologist for select youth. The average per diem cost of JJC day programs is \$42 (\$15,330 annually).

Each of these Commission costs is greatly in excess of the costs of probation, the most common court disposition. Juvenile probation supervision costs an estimated \$5 to \$6 a day (between about \$1,800 to \$2,200 annually). Intensive probation supervision costs about \$22 daily (about \$8,000 annually).

**2) *Enhance the JJC's Ability to Address the Security, Safety and Rehabilitative Needs Presented by Its Special Needs and Other Underserved Populations.***

The JJC needs to redeploy resources to address special needs populations. The juveniles in these populations are in need of rehabilitative programming efforts that exceed

the intervention strategies provided to the larger population of juvenile offenders by the JJC and the broader juvenile justice system. Rehabilitative gains made by the juveniles in these special needs populations during their involvement with the JJC and the broader juvenile justice system are likely to be limited without additional specialized interventions. Additional efforts to address these needs will translate into better adjustment within the custodial setting and lesser threats to public safety once these youth are returned to the community.

Enhancement of programming is therefore necessary. The required response includes an approach to dealing with special need populations that includes: a) efforts exclusively tied to the nature of JJC programming within the general custodial population; and b) joint interdepartmental efforts to provide proposed specialized programming for these populations under the jurisdiction of the JJC (see 1C. above). Redeployment of resources and dedication of additional resources to address this important responsibility have the potential to impact the balance between institutional and noninstitutional bed needs within the JJC if select populations are shifted from one to the other setting.

Enhancement is required regarding development of specialized units within the JJC. Some portion of the initiatives recommended below should involve joint interdepartmental efforts: planning, funding, and program development and provision. Also needed is the provision of enhanced specialized counseling and treatment services within existing settings (e.g., contracting for additional specialized mental health, sex offender, fire setter and substance abuse treatment and counseling services) for youth who continue to be maintained within the general population in the JJC's institutions and other facilities.

Note that the following recommendations on special needs program development focus on redeployment of existing resources rather than creation of new beds. Most of the

recommended beds would be made available through new use of the existing JJC institutional and noninstitutional programs and beds (see Table 10). In addition, some portion of the program development would be funded through the interdepartmental funding mechanism recommended above (see 1C).



**A) Create a) a thirty-two bed noninstitutional special needs complex; and b) 8 to 16 self-contained beds within a secure setting. Both initiatives would serve juveniles with moderate to serious mental health problems, intellectual deficits, problems presenting special vulnerability issues, and/or severe learning disabilities. The special interdepartmental funding mechanism could be utilized to implement this recommendation.**

The number of special needs programs and beds within the JJC has been reduced over the last ten years despite growing demands to serve special needs and other underserved populations. The reduction in beds is a result of attempts to accommodate growing numbers of committed youth who are not in need of such specialized services; the special programs were converted for general use. Juvenile offenders previously served by the above programs are now placed in the general population at NJTSB.

Special needs youth often have difficulties adjusting to the custodial setting and, as a result, are frequently difficult to handle and disruptive; they are also common targets of victimization. Consequently, they can be a staff management nightmare requiring an inordinate amount of custodial staff intervention if maintained in the general population, particularly when treatment interventions to address these special needs are not available in that setting. Disciplinary measures taken in response to this population's disruptive behavior can and do include removal to the most secure settings within an institution where they receive even fewer services than they might otherwise receive.

A select portion of these special needs juvenile offenders remain at JJC institutions who otherwise could be safely managed in the specialized noninstitutional complex being recommended here. Such a setting would provide the structure (staff secure), supervision (higher staff to offender ratio) and supportive treatment services required for this special population and for the maintenance of public safety. Selection for assignment to the complex would be guided by a formal assessment of security and other relevant needs of the juvenile.



**B) Create twenty noninstitutional beds for select juvenile sex offenders ( 8 beds for older juvenile sex offenders and 12 step-down beds) to expand the existing limited range of programming within the JJC. The special interdepartmental funding mechanism could be utilized to implement this recommendation.**

In recent years, demands on the JJC to supervise and care for juvenile sex offenders have increased. The number of juveniles in JJC institutions for sex offenses increased in 1998.

The vast majority of juvenile sex offenders under the jurisdiction of the JJC are placed in JJC institutions where services to address their special rehabilitative needs have traditionally been limited. This limitation is cause for concern from the perspective of the potential threat to public safety posed upon their release from custody. Juvenile sex offender treatment services within JJC institutions have improved, but fall short of fully meeting the need.

Juvenile sex offenders under the jurisdiction of the JJC vary greatly in the seriousness of their sex offenses and in the nature and duration of needed specialized treatment. They are committed to the JJC on sex offenses ranging from behavior not involving any physical contact (e.g, lewdness) to forcible rape. A select portion of juvenile sex offenders currently in JJC institutional settings could be safely and effectively handled in specialized juvenile sex offender programs within noninstitutional settings. Selection for assignment to any noninstitutional setting would be guided by a formal assessment of appropriateness related to public safety.

Specifically, the need exists for a small noninstitutional unit for sex offenders currently in institutional settings who are older than those typically admitted into the Pinelands population. To support the rehabilitative efforts currently provided to the JJC's juvenile sex offender population, 12 step-down beds are needed for offenders who have benefitted from the intensity of an offender specific environment, are pending release from

JJC and continue to need some supportive offender specific, community-based treatment. An additional select portion of the juvenile sex offender population currently in secure care could be successfully handled in the general population of the JJC's noninstitutional group centers. They would require contracted specialized sex offender services not normally provided.

**C) *Implement a comprehensive substance abuse screening and assessment procedure for all juveniles entering the JJC for the purpose of determining the extent and nature of substance abuse treatment/counseling needs of each youth, and further determining needs for the overall JJC population to direct future program development.***

Based on administration of screening instruments to committed youth, recent estimates suggest that about 68% of this population abuse substances to some extent. That would translate to close to 1,000 youth under the custody of the JJC potentially requiring in-patient substance abuse treatment, some lesser degree of substance abuse counseling, or education provided as a supplement to general interventions. More in-depth study and analysis of assessments of this population are required to determine JJC programming needs. It is anticipated that implementation of this recommendation will reveal a greater need (than recommended below) for specialized substance abuse beds.

**D) *Create fifty-seven noninstitutional specialized substance abuse treatment beds (40 beds duplicating the JJC's Campus Program for males, 10 beds to provide gender specific long-term treatment for female substance abusers, two relapse beds for females, and five beds for mentally ill and chemically addicted juveniles). These programs could be operated by JJC or a contracted provider. The special interdepartmental funding mechanism could be utilized to implement some portion of this recommendation.***

In 1998, there was a total of 163 institutional and noninstitutional substance abuse beds (plus 10 relapse intervention beds) available for use by juveniles under the jurisdiction of the JJC. These relapse intervention beds are reserved as an early response option for parole officers supervising youth who have completed a JJC substance abuse program and

have begun to once again abuse substances. This overall capacity is severely inadequate to address the already identified need for specialized substance abuse treatment among the JJC population. Currently there are no substance abuse beds for females committed to the JJC.

**3) *Enhance JJC Institutional and Noninstitutional Programs to Better Achieve Safety, Security and Rehabilitative Goals.***

Since its inception, the JJC has implemented various initiatives to enhance existing programming in its facilities and programs. In addition, the JJC began operating its Stabilization & Reintegration Program. Despite these efforts, there is a further identified need for program development and improvement. Without such continued program development, full realization of the JJC's mandate is hindered. At least in recent history, juvenile correctional programs across the country have focused on providing a correctional experience and not a systematically planned and delivered program of treatment and skills development, i.e., a rehabilitative environment integrated with overall security and correctional needs. Youth populations currently under the jurisdiction of State corrections and related agencies present a greater array of personal and social problems and pose greater difficulties for the achievement of safety and security goals than at earlier periods in our history.

Traditionally high rates of recidivism (e.g., rearrests) on the part of incarcerated youth, as a result, are likely to continue or worsen in the absence of a commitment to providing effective rehabilitative interventions for young offenders that aim to ameliorate deficiencies, build skills and capacities, and change behavior. Alongside the recognition of the necessity of a coherent treatment approach, is a growing (albeit still relatively meager) body of knowledge regarding what works for this youth population, and various elements of

this population.

The JJC is committed to increasing its capacity to integrate a more rehabilitative environment into its existing correctional efforts thus maximizing opportunities for successful reintegration of youth under its jurisdiction into their communities, ultimately better serving youth and, importantly, the goal of public safety.

The Commission would undertake a detailed program review and needs assessment process. This process would assess existing staffing, interventions and curricula, and diagnostic assessment capacity, along with various infrastructure needs.

**Required strategies include:**

**A) *Increase staffing (as extent and nature of need is identified).***

**B) *Expand staff training to facilitate staff development and achievement of program goals.***

Training is required to facilitate staff development. Training is required at both the program administration and line staff levels. It should include such areas as adolescent development; troubled youth and their families and communities; substance abuse; sexual abuse; mental health needs and mixed substance abuse/mental health needs. (See Recommendation 4 below for additional issues regarding training.)

**C) *Supplement existing staff by hiring more credentialed professional staff and/or securing needed professional services through contracts.***

This would include hiring full-time (or contracting for) social workers, case managers, psychologists, and certified substance abuse counselors to respond to the array of issues presented by youth in the Commission. Staff capabilities to address this array of needs must be supplemented for the JJC to fully achieve its rehabilitative goals.

This additional staffing and/or contracted services would facilitate the creation of a team approach with the goal of providing improved treatment and skill development for the

juvenile offender. The foundation of this team is the existing direct care staff: juvenile correctional officers and youth workers. The staffing enhancements would serve several key functions: 1) to augment the provision of direct services to, and evaluations of, youth; 2) to provide supervision, consultation and training to direct care staff; 3) to provide case management resources to assist within the institutions and programs and to assist Aftercare/Parole in developing case plans and linkages with the community; and 4) to assist in efforts to increase family involvement.

**D) *Better match programming and services with the juvenile offenders under the JJC's jurisdiction.***

One key ingredient to this is development of a comprehensive assessment process within the JJC. Comprehensive assessments would begin upon initial entry into the JJC (and possibly while awaiting placement with the Commission). The information resulting from needs assessments would assist treatment planning from the youth's initial placement throughout the juvenile's involvement with the JJC (including aftercare). The information resulting from assessments of offender risk (of reoffending) would assist JJC Aftercare/Parole decisions regarding the required levels of supervision for youth released from JJC custody. Despite existing efforts to assess offender needs within the JJC, no such comprehensive assessment process currently exists.

A second key ingredient would be to increase the variety and specialization of the JJC's facilities and programs, to address the highly varied needs of youth who come under the jurisdiction of the JJC. The fact that young offenders are different from each other in significant ways translates into differential ability to respond adequately to the interventions provided. For example, individuals with learning disabilities are less socially skilled than their peers. When asked to use cognitive social behaviors they tend to leap to a solution

rather than use problem solving strategies to construct the best solution. They also tend to engage in antisocial behavior versus prosocial behavior when they are pressured by peers. As a result, they are at a disadvantage with regard to achieving a positive adjustment in a correctional setting. Further, many youth under the jurisdiction of the JJC have special education needs, and therefore would benefit from enhanced efforts. An estimated 40% of juveniles in JJC noninstitutional programs have been classified as special education students.

A third, and related, key ingredient is the overall enhancement of existing curricula and interventions, as needed, to better address offender needs. This further program development should be guided, in large part, by an examination of aggregate information collected regarding the existing needs of youth under the JJC's jurisdiction.

**E) *Expand JJC involvement of family members in its interventions with youth served in its facilities and programs.***

Family difficulties are often implicated in the delinquent and other problem behavior of juvenile offenders. As a result, the JJC needs to respond to the juvenile offender not in isolation but with parallel involvement of family members. Examples of this approach include helping families access services in the community, and providing counseling to families to the extent feasible. In addition, the JJC must maximize its information and understanding of family issues, including family strengths, so as to enhance families' ability to serve as effective allies in efforts to successfully transition youth back to their communities.

**Cost Considerations**

Enhancement of JJC facilities and programs will come at a cost. For example, enhancements of the sort described above of JJC residential programs, currently provided at \$87 per diem, could require an additional \$20 to \$40 per diem. Residential program

costs in a number of other states revealed a broad range in expenditures. Typical correctional programs in residential settings ranged in cost from about \$95 to \$150. They often included the services of counselors who are either Bachelors Degree level graduates in select subject areas or who have attained university or other certification as "youth counselors," as well as an on-grounds psychologist or related weekly contracted services and consultation. It is likely that enhancement of institutional programming would have similar increased costs.

An initial review of program needs by JJC staff has determined that a \$10 per diem (per juvenile) expenditure in the institutions and the noninstitutional programs would lead to substantial improvements in programming through the enhancements in staffing at the institutions and noninstitutional programs described supra at 120. The total cost of the enhancement is approximately \$4.5 million. Further needs will be determined through a detailed program review and needs assessment.

Developing specialized units for various special needs populations within the JJC (see recommendation 2, supra at 114), along with expanding services for those populations within the general population of JJC youth would tend to increase overall costs even more, although there could be cost savings attached to this approach (e.g., diversion of select youth from institutional placement to JJC noninstitutional placements with the availability of needed supportive services). In addition, some portion of the funding required for these specialized units would be provided directly through the specially funded interdepartmental program development effort proposed earlier (see recommendation 1C, supra at 110).

Small secure units providing specialized services to special needs populations would likely average about \$180 to \$190 a day. An examination of several states' programming for special needs populations (including DYFS funded programs) revealed a broad range in per

diem costs, from about \$110 to \$300. Programs with costs approximating \$200 per diem typically include comprehensive treatment with both Masters and Bachelors Degree level practitioners, as well as psychological, medical and nursing services on grounds.

Ultimately the justification for increased expenditure of taxpayer dollars for enhanced JJC programming is its impact on offenders' future behavior. This translates into a cost effective approach, by reducing long-term costs tied to subsequent delinquency and adult criminal careers. The rehabilitative goals are to provide programming that decreases the likelihood of subsequent juvenile and adult lawbreaking, and that helps prepare youth for productive adult lives. Successful attainment of these goals benefits not only the juvenile offender but also the society, not least of all by helping protect the public from future victimization.

**4) *Develop, staff, and fund a JJC Training Academy. The Academy would provide needed training for JJC Operations, Education and Aftercare/Parole Services staff members.***

Currently, JJC's juvenile correctional officers and juvenile parole officers routinely receive extensive training by the Department of Corrections' Corrections Staff Training Academy. Non-custodial staff currently receive only limited in-service training.

The JJC handles a juvenile offender population presenting behavior and rehabilitative challenges that are increasingly difficult to address. This combined with the limited training and staff development opportunities adversely impacts the JJC's ability to achieve its goals of public protection, offender accountability and offender rehabilitation, within a safe and secure environment. Training and development for staff assigned to noninstitutional group centers, where safety and security relies on staff (and not locks), is a particularly urgent need.



There is an overall need for increased knowledge, skill and expertise in areas such as juvenile supervision, unit security, management/supervision skills and techniques, team building, completing comprehensive risk and needs assessments of juveniles, adolescent development, anger management, identifying and working with gang members, adolescent psychology, deescalating crises, the dynamics of and working with special needs populations, interpreting diagnostic evaluations, developing rehabilitation plans, working with families, abandonment, death and bereavement issues for survivors, cultural sensitivity and valuing diversity, working with victims of abuse and neglect, and identification and matching of existing and available community-based (aftercare) resources with a juvenile's needs.

The JJC should explore the potential for affiliating the Academy with a public college or university so that the trainee has an opportunity to earn college credits. This practice exists in other states. An affiliation should also be established with professional licensing boards to allow for the awarding of continuing education credits. These benefits would be motivational and rewarding to training participants.

In addition to training JJC staff, the JJC should explore the feasibility of providing an educational resource to other components of the juvenile justice system (e.g. County Youth Services Commissions, Multidisciplinary Teams). The Academy could develop training/informational modules regarding the JJC, its operation and its relationship to the broader juvenile justice system.

- 5) ***Enhance program development efforts through ongoing and integrated research, evaluation and planning. This would include more systematic monitoring and evaluation of the performance of JJC facilities and JJC Aftercare/Parole, as well as the JJC administered State/Community Partnership Grant Program.***

Historically, correctional agencies have not systematically examined the performance

and effectiveness of their correctional programming. However, government is increasingly being asked to show results with regard to its use of taxpayer dollars. A coordinated research, evaluation and planning approach would facilitate program development that is responsive to identified needs. The JJC should enhance its current effort in this area.

A detailed report on the implementation and performance of the JJC's Stabilization & Reintegration Program was submitted to the Governor and Legislature. The report grew out of a comprehensive research study of the program. In response to recommendations for program development, an implementation plan was developed with regard to those recommendations and a number of enhancements to this promising program have already begun and/or are in the process of being initiated. This process demonstrates the value of a more systematic attempt to evaluate the performance of correctional programming, within the context of guiding future policy and planning.

## THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

- 1) ***Efforts should be made within the public school setting to identify as early in their educational careers as feasible those students who are at high risk of entry into the juvenile justice system, including those who have begun to exhibit various problem behaviors that appear correlated with subsequent delinquency. Identified high risk students should be comprehensively assessed to identify problem areas or needs that may be addressed by early intervention efforts.***

Research indicates that youth at risk of future involvement in delinquency and related problem behaviors, such as substance abuse, can often be identified at a fairly early age, frequently while they are still elementary school students. An array of factors have been identified as risk factors for future delinquency and repetitive offending. Many of these factors are also related to other youth problems that tend to interfere with healthy personal adjustment and growth. These include problems in such areas as the family, school (including learning difficulties), substance abuse, mental health, and cognitive and life skills development.

Early identification of the needs of juveniles and their families, when combined with appropriate intervention efforts, provide a cost effective strategy relative to the expense incurred by the system when incarceration (at the county or State level) becomes necessary.

The public school is best situated to assess the existence of such needs and to facilitate efforts to secure early intervention services to address identified needs to the extent feasible. The education system should interface with community-based prevention and early intervention components of the human services and juvenile justice system on behalf of the student. Educational personnel should reach out to community-based groups and organizations, including County and Municipal Youth Services Commissions, and DHS local planning bodies, to identify resources available to supplement the school's otherwise available prevention and early intervention efforts with its students.

The State's recently begun Educational Reform initiative mandates preschool services for three and four year olds to help prepare children in special needs (Abbott) districts for a successful educational experience. The initiative also mandates a systematic early intervention effort in the special needs districts. That initiative holds promise for effective collaborations between the schools and local juvenile justice and human service planning and service development agencies. This comprehensive approach to prevention and early intervention can be expected to have a positive impact on minority children and youth who are disproportionately represented in these districts, as they are in the juvenile justice system.

As part of the State mandate, each elementary and middle school must now have a dropout prevention coordinator. Coordinators will identify youth to be served in the system and connect them with resources in school and in the community. Dropout prevention coordinators should become members of Multidisciplinary Teams (MDTs) which access Partnership Program and other public and private resources. The coordinator could also work with JJC Aftercare's transition specialists to help connect JJC youth with the school (including alternative schools) and community resources in preparation for their release from custody.

Significantly, an estimated two-thirds of the JJC population reside in one of the 28 Abbott districts. The systematic preschool and early intervention efforts planned in these districts hold great promise of impacting the problem of serious and violent youth crime in New Jersey.

- 2) ***The Family Court, with the support of the Administrative Office of the Courts, should implement an early assessment and early intervention program targeting high risk juveniles charged with or adjudicated on delinquency offenses for special interventions addressing identified needs. This would include an enhancement of existing data gathering and information sharing practices, development of risk and needs assessment instruments, and a***

***protocol for use of relevant information in court decision making.***

Accumulated research has demonstrated that instruments can be developed to identify high risk populations early, when the juveniles are young and have not yet committed serious crimes. There is a clear need for enhanced data gathering and information sharing practices by the court early on in youths' court careers to inform court decision making. This information would allow the court to better assess youths' risk of subsequent offending and to better assess youths' needs (e.g., regarding family, school, substance abuse and mental health problems) through the use of structured risk and needs assessment instruments. There has been a longstanding interest in developing risk and needs instruments to identify those court involved juveniles who would benefit from early intervention services. These assessment instruments need to be developed. Discussion is required regarding the nature and scope of the required assessments, utilizing existing expertise. The assessments should rely, in part, on information provided by agencies outside of the court that can supplement information provided by interviewing the youth and one or more family members. Timely access to relevant information from other State agencies and the schools (e.g., school performance, behavior and attendance records, and child study team evaluations) is critical to achieving assessments of desirable quality.

A pilot research project funded by the federal OJJDP was initiated in New Jersey in 1993 to test the usefulness of such an early assessment and early intervention program. Data was gathered from juveniles and their parents/guardians through interviews in two counties, and used to complete detailed risk and needs assessment instruments developed for the project. The resulting scoring on risk and needs was utilized by court personnel (intake workers in diverted cases and judges in adjudicated cases) in their decision making.

The project's findings, published in a report to OJJDP in 1996, were encouraging. One important finding was that the risk instrument (and an empirically derived revised instrument) both predicted chronic offending well. The report also supports the usefulness of early intervention for these identified high risk youth. The report argues persuasively for administering the assessments at youths' second court involvement: well over half of juveniles who come to court a first time never return; by the third involvement, youth are well on their way toward lengthy court careers.

Therefore, there is strong evidence to expect that systematic evaluation of juveniles' risk of re-offending (along with identifying and addressing relevant needs) after a second involvement with the Family Court would be a cost effective and valuable tool for the court to help prevent subsequent serious and chronic offending.

- 3) *Counties should determine specific needs across a potential range of detention alternative programs, and develop appropriate options as needed. This array of detention alternative programs should be seen as a necessary adjunct to a county's secure detention resources. The purpose of such detention alternatives should be to make options available to judges which provide varying levels of supervision and structure in the community short of placement in secure detention facilities. This would help match available alternative programs to the levels of risk posed by juveniles who come before the court.***

Detention Reform Project data show that a lack of sufficient detention alternatives and a lack of space in detention alternative programs that already exist contribute to detention overcrowding. Counties now have an opportunity to develop and expand detention alternative programs through Partnership Program and JJDP funding. It is important that the counties now determine their current program needs and develop appropriate detention alternative programming options accordingly. County representatives interviewed and surveyed for the Project report that the detention alternatives most in need of development are shelter beds and other out-of-home placement options (e.g., host homes,

group homes).

Risk assessment instruments can be developed to assist decision making regarding the appropriateness of specific detention alternative options (based on the level of security and structure provided by each program) or outright release to the community for youth deemed not in need of continued placement in secure detention.

- 4) ***Counties should develop, as needed, select detention alternative programs to avoid placement of youth in secure detention facilities who would avoid such placement if not for family instability or related family issues. Specifically, shelter care, host homes, group homes and highly structured day reporting programs, could serve to provide degrees of supervision that might be required for such juveniles short of placement in secure detention.***

The Detention Reform Project findings indicate that, when making detention and retention decisions, juvenile justice decision makers weigh heavily their understanding of the level of supervision and stability in a youth's home. As a result, a significant number of youth are placed and remain in secure detention facilities due to the real or perceived inadequate supervision and/or family instability. But for this fact, these youth might otherwise avoid such placement.

Counties should develop, as needed, select detention alternative programs to avoid placement or retention of youth in secure detention facilities who would avoid such placement if not for family instability or related family issues. Specifically, shelter care, host homes, group homes and highly structured day reporting programs, could serve to provide degrees of supervision that might be required for such juveniles short of placement in secure detention.

- 5) ***County efforts should be undertaken to avoid placement in secure detention, where appropriate, of youth solely as a response to a violation of probation. This can be accomplished in part through the development of a system of graduated sanctions short of placement in secure detention available to***

***probation officers as a response to probationer failure to abide by conditions of their probation.***

Detention Reform Project results show that probation violators comprise a large portion of the secure detention population in some counties. Their placement in secure detention facilities is, in part, due to a lack of available options (e.g., graduated sanctions) in the community. A majority of juvenile justice system representatives interviewed and surveyed stated their belief that the availability of graduated sanctions in the community would reduce the need for secure detention placement for many probation violators, depending on the nature and characteristics of the juvenile's violation.

- 6) *Provide to Juvenile Probation Services funding necessary to enhance achievement of system goals. Such enhancements should include: increased probation funding to provide for more probation officers and the capacity to expand and enhance existing community service programs; development of a greater array of sanctions (graduated sanctions) available to probation officers; and expansion and improvement of services for use by probation officers.***

Broad acknowledgment exists regarding a need to reduce existing Juvenile Probation caseloads to better achieve both public safety and rehabilitative goals. There is also a serious lack of sanctions and services available to officers that could be utilized with probationers. The lack of community-based graduated sanctions contributes to the filing of violations of probation charges when they might otherwise be avoided. The existing gaps in sanctions and services for juvenile probationers will continue in the absence of additional funding to address this important population. Greater attention to services and graduated sanctions at the level of juvenile probation supervision would translate into less pressure on



the other, more expensive, components of the juvenile justice system (secure detention, residential placements, institutionalization).

**7) *Increase the availability of community service opportunities for juveniles under probation supervision.***

Ordering juvenile offenders to perform community service activities is a widely used disposition of the court, as a sole disposition or in combination with other components of a disposition (e.g., probation). Community service also serves as a resource for diverted cases (e.g., youth handled by local Juvenile Conference Committees or the Family Court's Intake Service Conferences). However, judges and other court representatives report that community service remains an underutilized court resource. This is so, in part, due to the fact that staff shortages serve as a barrier to juvenile probation departments' ability to adequately coordinate community service programs, to develop adequate sites, and to provide the needed supervision. There are also longstanding perceptions regarding the difficulties of overcoming liability issues.

Several strategies could be pursued including the following.

- ?? Liability issues raised by municipalities could be effectively addressed by a legislative initiative that would hold local communities harmless in the face of potential suits.
- ?? County Youth Services Commissions should be called upon to play a role in facilitating the greater use of community service by the court and its allied personnel (e.g., the court diversion resource within communities, the Juvenile Conference Committees). CYSCs can assist in linking municipal governments with the county's probation department, and otherwise help resolve barriers to greater municipality responsiveness in implementing community service projects.
- ?? The faith community should be involved in developing and implementing community service projects. In Camden County, for example, the faith community is currently involved with the Juvenile Conference Committees, and helps provide local community service sites.
- ?? The AOC and CYSCs should collaborate with JJC Restorative Justice to assist the process of developing and implementing community service projects. The Victim-

Witness Coordinator of the Camden County Prosecutor's Office is assisting the Restorative Justice staff in coordinating projects. The program could be replicated elsewhere. In addition, the JJC Restorative Justice Coordinator and the Administrator of the State/Community Partnership Grant Program could meet with Family Court presiding judges to foster such cooperative efforts.

**8) *Improve the accessibility and responsiveness of contracted programs to the Family Court in its attempt to provide the most appropriate disposition to court-involved youth. Close review and examination of criteria for admission and retention would facilitate this improvement.***

Judges continue to have limited community-based dispositional options (sanctions and services) for juveniles adjudicated on delinquency charges. The court must typically choose between ordering probation supervision and ordering placement/commitment with the JJC or other State agencies.

Increased community-based dispositional options (sanctions and services) would enhance the court's ability to match juveniles to the most appropriate court response. Such options would also increase the availability of local solutions for local problems. Examples of such programming efforts would be day reporting programs, increased community service opportunities, joint Probation-school programs, and a variety of contracted services provided through the Partnership, JJDP and other local, State and Federally funded programs. One goal of the Partnership and JJDP funding is to help reduce minority overrepresentation in State correctional settings through the development of community-based programming. Grant programs which use formula allocations for funds will reach high-crime, dense population centers where many of these juveniles reside.

The County Youth Services Commissions, using the procedures developed through

the Partnership Program, are taking steps to plan and coordinate these contracted services with Probation and the Family Court. The CYSCs and the MDTs are more clearly defining the youth to be served by the contracted programs and then holding the programs accountable through monitoring and a computerized client information system. These efforts at contract accountability should be continued and enhanced.

- 9) ***The Juvenile Justice Commission, Department of Human Services, Department of Health and Senior Services, Department of Labor and AOC Juvenile Probation Services should develop agreements to provide multi-agency interventions and collaboration on behalf of juveniles adjudicated delinquent for whom they share responsibility. This collaboration in individual cases should help ensure that juveniles with cross agency needs receive the benefits and most appropriate services currently available through each department.***

The JJC, each of the divisions within DHS, the Juvenile Probation Service, Department of Health and Senior Services and the Department of Labor, and local school districts have expertise in working with certain juvenile populations. Each agency provides specific services to juveniles. Each has its own discrete mission, function and identified client population.

The needs of court-involved juveniles (and their families) are not so discrete. Typically, their needs extend beyond the boundaries of any one agency. This is most notably true for the juveniles in the special needs populations who are experiencing or exhibiting mental health problems, cognitive impairments, sexually abusive behavior, and substance abuse.

Interagency collaboration currently exists with regard to identifying needs and providing rehabilitative services for individual youth. Multidisciplinary Teams and DHS

local planning bodies (i.e., CARTS) are two important examples of the collaborative approach. MDTs assist the court in developing options for detention alternatives and appropriate dispositions, and assist JJC Aftercare/Parole in developing plans for community services, by using Partnership funded and other programs available in the community. Both processes have demonstrated their ability to fashion interagency plans to meet the needs of juveniles and their families. Such collaboration should be achieved more systematically. Despite these efforts, there are individuals who do not come to the attention of these groups. For them, additional collaborative mechanisms are required to help ensure that needed services are provided.

These collaborations have the potential to help judges match juveniles' needs for sanctions and services with dispositional resources. Secondly, such collaborations can help agencies access much needed aftercare services, thus helping to sustain rehabilitative gains and, ultimately, better serve public safety. Finally, collaboration can facilitate a pooling of resources that will minimize the need for divisions to create services currently available in another division.

**10) *Efforts should be made to include families, particularly parents/caregivers in the intervention efforts provided to court-involved families.***

New Jersey's Juvenile Code emphasizes the importance of families in considering the handling of juvenile cases before the court. The Code also provides for involvement of the family as a dispositional option for judges. Despite the family focus of the Code, the court and other components of the juvenile justice system often respond to the offending juvenile in isolation, with limited attention to the family.

Family dynamics, the family's strengths as well as areas of familial dysfunction that may be contributing to the juvenile's delinquency or may interfere with the juvenile's ability

to respond positively to court orders, should be considered when developing intervention strategies. The existence of (particularly younger) siblings within the family unit should be determined with the goal of providing prevention services to them.

The vast majority of juveniles appearing before the court remain in their homes subsequent to disposition. Intervention plans devised to work with the family, in concert with intervention efforts concerning the juvenile, present the greatest opportunity to impact on future delinquency.

When the court orders an out-of-home placement for the juvenile, attempts should be made to work with families simultaneously when the need for such efforts has been identified. Many parents are willing to be participants in these efforts, but other circumstances or responsibilities (e.g. caring for younger children without babysitters; no transportation) hamper intervention efforts. Parental resistance is not uncommon. The provision of out-of-home placement services to the juvenile and his or her family by a community-based agency located close to the home provides the greatest opportunity to overcome these barriers. There is a greater probability that home visits by agency staff and/or parental visits to the agency will occur.

In cases where juveniles are placed in programs that are a significant distance from the family home, (e.g. substance abuse treatment, JJC units, DYFS residential treatment centers), efforts should be made to identify community-based counseling agencies located near the family. Agreement among agencies, (e.g. Probation, DHS, JJC, Partnership Programs, JJDP funded programs, Youth Incentive Programs) to collaborate in the provision of services to the juvenile *and* his/her family simultaneously, has the potential to produce comprehensive interventions and supportive aftercare that facilitates the juvenile's reintegration into the home.

- 11) ***Overall supervision of Juvenile/Family Crisis Intervention Units (JFCIUs) should remain with the Administrative Office of the Courts. The AOC is encouraged to strengthen statewide standards for JFCIUs, and to request funds to set up a grant program to encourage agencies outside of the Family Court to develop JFCIU related programs and services to bring every county up to a minimum level of staffing and services. It is suggested that the planning for the JFCIU programs funded through these grants be part of the Comprehensive County Youth Services Plan developed biennially by each County Youth Services Commission.***

The Juvenile Code (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-20, et seq.) eliminated the Juveniles In Need of Supervision (JINS) category which consisted of status offenses such as truancy, incorrigibility and running away from home. Instead, the Code required that each county establish one or more 24 hour on-call Juvenile Crisis Intervention Units, a mechanism which will provide troubled juveniles and their families a noncoercive opportunity to resolve conflicts and receive needed services. Eight county JFCIUs were established prior to 1983, when the Code became effective. Some of the early court-related family counseling initiatives were started as grant funded programs. The other thirteen units were established subsequent to the effective date of the revised Code.

Underlying the creation of the JFCIUs was the legislative conclusion that much juvenile misconduct is a result of troubled family circumstances. Therefore, JFCIUs were structured to treat juvenile problems within the context of the family. JFCIUs attempt to stabilize the immediate crisis existing in a family by offering short-term counseling services and making referrals to other agencies. If a family does not cooperate with the JFCIU, or when all community resources are exhausted and a juvenile/family crisis continues to exist,

the matter may be referred to court through the filing of a petition (N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-83).

Funding, operation, staffing and effectiveness of JFCIUs vary greatly across counties. Further, there is an indication that JFCIUs operated outside of the judiciary operate in a somewhat more effective manner than do those under the direct management by the courts. However, despite disparities across counties, JFCIUs have proven their value as a necessary part of the juvenile justice system.

**12) *Develop career and employment opportunities for juveniles in the juvenile justice system by strengthening linkages between the Department of Labor, County Workforce Investment Boards, private industry and Juvenile Probation Services and JJC noninstitutional units, institutions and Aftercare/Parole Services.***

Many of the juveniles involved with the juvenile justice system need jobs. They need instruction in the skills necessary to seek out, secure and maintain employment. They need exposure to, and guidance about, career opportunities that exist within the State. Most importantly, these young adults need assistance in being connected with a job and supportive coaching or mentoring to help them become valuable employees.

Efforts should be undertaken to implement or expand curricula within traditional schools, alternative schools and juvenile justice system programs, including JJC programs, that will instruct juveniles in job readiness skills and facilitate career exploration opportunities. County Youth Services Commissions should facilitate the development of linkages between the programs with the juveniles and employers with the jobs (e.g., through the WIB members on the CYSC). Juvenile Justice Commission programs and Aftercare/Parole, as well as juvenile probation, should develop job/training sites within communities, in collaboration with WIBs, private industry, and such organizations as Habitat for Humanity and Homebuilders Institute, that will facilitate the placement of juveniles under their supervision into paying positions.

Additional strategies to facilitate developing employment opportunities for these juveniles could include, for example, development of entrepreneurial opportunities within the JJC (e.g., auto detailing, landscaping), and recruiting volunteers from private industry or public agencies that would mentor individual juveniles and take on the juvenile as an assistant/trainee at the workplace with the goal of helping the juvenile graduate to a paying position within the organization.

Enhancing juveniles' prospects for employment will serve both the goal of rehabilitation and the goal of protecting the public.

**13) *Develop systematic efforts by the juvenile justice system and related agencies to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of existing programming. This identification of what works will enhance funding decisions as well as decisions regarding program replication.***

Historically, the juvenile justice system has not systematically examined the performance and effectiveness of programming provided to juvenile offenders. However, government is increasingly being asked to show results with regard to its use of taxpayer dollars. There is general agreement regarding the need to examine and better determine what works with regard to juvenile justice system programs. Greater knowledge is required regarding programs' effectiveness and efficient use of scarce juvenile justice resources. Such research and evaluation is needed to facilitate decisions regarding budgetary allocations and authorizations for the development, replication and implementation of promising and effective programs and interventions.